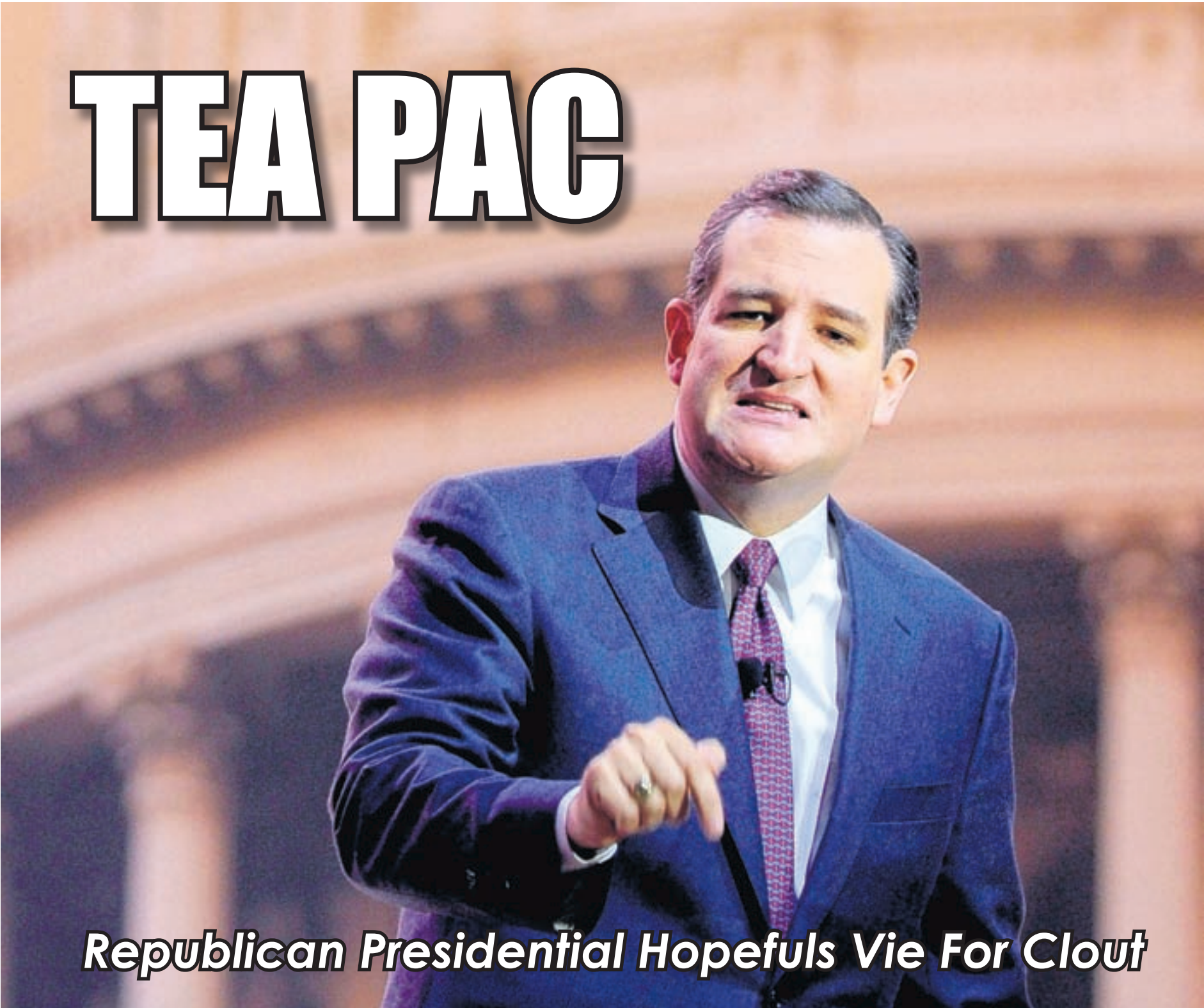


TEA PAC



Republican Presidential Hopefuls Vie For Clout

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas speaks at the Conservative Political Action Committee annual conference, Thursday, March 6, 2014, in National Harbor, Md. Thursday marked the first day of the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, which brings together prospective presidential candidates, conservative opinion leaders and tea party activists from coast to coast.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

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US ANNOUNCES NEW SANCTIONS IN UKRAINE CRISIS

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SENATE BLOCKS MILITARY ASSAULT CASE CHANGES

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US announces new sanctions in Ukraine crisis

**MICHAEL R. GORDON
ELLEN BARRY
ALISSA J. RUBIN**
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ROME - The United States escalated its response to Russia's military and economic threats to Ukraine on Thursday, announcing that it had imposed visa bans on officials and others deemed responsible for actions that have undermined Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The new sanctions, promulgated by the Obama administration, carried the threat of further steps. The announcement came as the European Union took its first steps toward punitive measures and as Secretary of State John Kerry met for a second day with the Russian foreign minister, Sergei V. Lavrov, on ways to defuse the Ukraine crisis, one of the most serious East-West confrontations since the Cold War.

Russian officials reacted angrily and suggested that Russia would reciprocate with its own anti-U.S. sanctions. "The U.S. has the right, and we have the right to respond to it," Vladimir Lukin, Russia's human rights commissioner and a former ambassador to the United States, was quoted by Russia's Interfax news agency as saying. "But all that is, of course, not making me happy." In Washington, President Barack Obama said the new sanctions were intended to demonstrate that the world stands united against the Russian occupation of Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula this past weekend. "These decisions con-

tinue our efforts to impose a cost on Russia and those responsible for the situation in Crimea," he said. Obama emphasized that

lation of the crisis by allowing international monitors into all of Ukraine, including Crimea, and opening talks between Russia and

sia, and of 17 of his closest aides and family members, holding them responsible for the embezzlement of state funds.



Protesters wave Ukrainian flags during a demonstration calling for further action by the U.S. government in Ukraine, outside the White House in Washington, March 6, 2014. Obama reiterated America's desire to unite the international community in opposition to what he called Russia's violation of international law Thursday, and said that a referendum proposed by the Crimean Parliament to break away from Ukraine would be unacceptable.

(Gabriella Demczuk/The New York Times)

they were taken "in close coordination with our European allies," in effect rejecting efforts by Russia to split the United States from its partners on the other side of the Atlantic. "I'm pleased our international unity is on display at this important moment," he said. But he reached out to Moscow, calling for a de-escalation

of the crisis. "There is a way to resolve this crisis that respects the interests of the Russian Federation as well as the Ukrainian people," he said.

In Brussels, the 28-nation European Union announced measures to freeze the assets of Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Kremlin president of Ukraine who fled to Rus-

sia. The EU also took the first steps towards more serious and concrete diplomatic and economic sanctions against Russia by immediately suspending talks on a wide-ranging political and economic pact and on visa liberalization, which would have made it easier for Russians to travel to Europe. □

UN rights experts demand answers about Venezuela

JOHN HEILPRIN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — United Nations human rights experts demanded answers Thursday from Venezuela's government about the use of violence and imprisonment in a crackdown on widespread demonstrations.

Six experts with the U.N.'s top human rights body wrote to the administration of President Nicolas Maduro about allegations of protesters being beaten and in some cases severely tortured by security forces, and taken to military facilities, cut off from communication and denied legal help, U.N. officials said.

"The recent violence amid protests in Venezuela need to be urgently and thoroughly investigated, and perpetrators must be held accountable," the experts said in a joint statement.

The six experts — special rapporteurs Frank La Rue, Maina Kiai, Mads Andenas, Juan Méndez, Christof Heyns and Margaret Sekaggya — report to the 47-nation U.N. Human Rights Council, based in Geneva.

The Venezuelan economy's downward spiral helped trigger a wave of protests against Maduro in mid-February that has claimed more than a dozen lives.

Venezuela's U.N. Mission in Geneva dismissed the experts' request for answers as an unfortunate echo of what they described as an international disinformation campaign to undermine their government.

Also Thursday, Julieta Lopez, a Swiss-based aunt of Venezuela's top opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, told reporters at the U.N. in Geneva that he is being held in isolation at a military prison more than an hour from the capital Caracas, where he sleeps on the floor of a tiny cell. She said her nephew faces a variety of false criminal charges but hopes his imprisonment will help "awaken Venezuela." □

American CEO of bitcoin exchange found dead

SATISH CHENEY
Associated Press
SINGAPORE (AP) — The American CEO of a virtual currency exchange was found dead near her home in Singapore.

A police spokesman said Thursday that initial investigations indicated there was no suspicion of "foul play" in the Feb. 26 death of 28-year-old Autumn

Radtke, meaning officers do not suspect murder. The spokesman said police found Radtke lying motionless near the apartment tower where she lived.

Police have so far classified the death as "unnatural," which can mean an accident, misadventure, or suicide. Radtke's company, First Meta, said it was "shocked and saddened

by the tragic loss." First Meta allows users of virtual currencies such as bitcoin to trade and cash out the currencies. It is one of several such exchanges.

The future of bitcoin has been under scrutiny since the collapse of the Mt. Gox exchange in Tokyo last month.

Radtke had worked at other tech companies. A

funeral for her was held Wednesday in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, according to Hartson Funeral Home. Postings on her Facebook page showed her to be a believer in the potential of virtual currencies.

Last month, she linked to an article on entrepreneurs suffering depression, commenting above the link: everything has its price. □

US Senate blocks change to military sex assault cases

DONNA CASSATA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bowing to the Pentagon, the Senate agreed after im-

passioned debate Thursday to leave the authority to prosecute rapes and other serious crimes with U.S. military commanders in

a struggle that highlighted the growing role of women in Congress.

The vote was 55-45 in favor of stripping commanders of

that authority, but that was short of the 60 necessary to move ahead on the legislation sponsored by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand. It would have given the decision to take serious crimes to court-martial to seasoned military trial lawyers, independent of the chain of command. The debate and vote was the culmination of a nearly yearlong campaign to curb sexual assault in the ranks, led by female senators who have questioned whether the military's mostly male leadership understands differences between relatively minor sexual offenses and serious crimes that deserve swift and decisive justice.

Pentagon leaders vigorously opposed the measure, as did former prosecutors and military veterans in the Senate who argued that commanders should have more responsibility, not less, for the conduct of the men and women they lead.

"We can't let the commanders walk away," insisted Sen. Claire McCaskill, who bemoaned the tenor of a policy debate that pitted her against fellow Democrat Gillibrand.

Backers of the measure insisted that piecemeal reforms have had only a limited impact on a problem that even the military has called an epidemic. Survey results have suggested that some 26,000 women may have been sexually assaulted in the most recent accounting with thousands unwilling to come forward for fear of inaction or retribution. Conservative Sens. Ted Cruz and Rand Paul, both possible Republican presidential candidates in 2016, backed her effort, while the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Democratic Sen. Carl Levin, opposed it. Including Gillibrand, the bill had the support of 17 of the Senate's 20 women. □



Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., left, accompanied by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 6, 2014, following a Senate vote on military sexual assaults. The Senate blocked a bill that would have stripped senior military commanders of their authority to prosecute rapes and other serious offenses, capping an emotional, nearly yearlong fight over how best to curb sexual assault in the ranks.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

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Republican presidential hopefuls vie for clout



Donald Trump addresses the Conservative Political Action Committee annual conference in National Harbor, Md., Thursday, March 6, 2014. Thursday marked the first day of the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, which brings together prospective presidential candidates, conservative opinion leaders and tea party activists from coast to coast.

(AP Photo/Cliff Owen)

Associated Press

OXON HILL, Maryland (AP)

— Republicans vying for the party's presidential nomination in 2016 auditioned Thursday before some of the nation's most ardent conservative leaders, calling for the party to unite behind a clear agenda and draw contrasts with Democrats.

The contestants ranged from Sen. Ted Cruz, a conservative tea party champion, to New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, a favorite of the Republican establishment. "If you want to lose elections, stand for nothing," said Cruz, who referred as examples to the unsuccessful presidential bids of Bob Dole, John McCain and Mitt Romney. "When you don't stand and draw a clear distinction, when you don't stand for principle, Democrats celebrate." The annual Conservative Political Action Conference offered an early tryout of sorts for a half-dozen Republican officials eager to win over the party's most passionate voters. At stake this year is the Senate majority, currently held by senators in President Barack Obama's Democratic party. But for all, the November elections could serve as a springboard for the next presidential contest. Republicans have much to mend before 2016, starting with a stark ideological divide between the party's establishment and the super-conservatives who rose to power in the tea party-fueled 2010 elections that delivered a Republican House majority. Fiscal crises, compromises and a war of words have separated the factions from the top down despite widespread agreement that Obama's signature health care law should be overturned.

More than two years out from the election to succeed Obama, there's no clear front-runner for the Republican nomination. But Republicans interested in the job are filing across the stage at a hotel complex outside Washington — bashing the media, criti-

cizing Obama and making a case for being the candidate who can win the White House. For Christie, the event was the first major step back into the national spotlight and a chance to revive his image from a political retribution scandal in which his aides ordered the closing of lanes near New Jersey's George Washington Bridge. Before the conservative crowd, he ignored his administration's recent troubles and showed flashes of the fighting spirit that has defined his political career. Christie won a standing ovation after a 15-minute speech in which he declared: "We have to stop letting the media define who we are and what we stand for."

He later called on party leaders and tea party leaders alike to "start talking about what we're for and not what we're against."

The conservative conference comes less than a year after the Republican National Committee released a comprehensive plan to broaden the party's appeal after a disappointing 2012 election season.

Most of the speakers touched upon existing divisions within the party that threaten to derail its plans. They offered varied perspectives on foreign policy, social issues and political strategy, but each insisted that the Republican Party's future is bright. And as Obama and European leaders try to address Russian military aggression in Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, Republicans faulted the president's leadership around the globe.

Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, pointing to global hot spots such as North Korea, Iran and Ukraine, said Obama thought he could shape global events "through the sheer force of his personality" and by giving speeches around the world. "We cannot ignore that the flawed foreign policy of the last few years has brought us to this stage," Rubio said, adding that the U.S. was the one nation that could "stand up to the spread of totalitarianism." □

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US general pleads guilty on 3 counts; not assault

ALLEN G. BREED
MICHAEL BIESECKER
Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, North Carolina (AP) — A U.S. general accused of sexual assault pleaded guilty Thursday to three lesser charges, a re-

member of the U.S. military ever to face trial on sexual assault charges, comes as the Pentagon grapples with revelations of rampant rape and sexual misconduct within the ranks. The U.S. Senate on Thursday

dress uniform, Sinclair stood ramrod straight before a judge Thursday and pleaded guilty to three charges that could send him to prison for up to 15 years. Sinclair, 51, still faces five other charges stemming

evidence prosecutors can present.

The former deputy commander of the 82nd Airborne could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted of the sexual assaults. Opening statements were expected Friday.

Asked by judge Col. James Pohl whether he clearly understood the consequences of his admissions, the decorated veteran of five combat deployments answered in a clear voice, with no emotion: "Yes sir."

The general pleaded guilty to having improper relationships with two female Army officers and to committing adultery with a third, the captain who was his longtime mistress. Adultery is a crime in the military. He also admitted to violat-

ing orders by possessing pornography and to conduct unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman. After he knew he was under investigation, Sinclair also admitted deleting nude photos from a personal email account sent by a civilian woman with whom he was childhood friends. Sinclair's lawyer Richard Scheff said before the plea that his client was taking responsibility for his actions, but also strengthening his legal position.

By admitting guilt on the three charges for which there is the strongest evidence, the married father of two hoped to narrow the focus of the trial to charges that rely heavily on the testimony and credibility of his former mistress. □



Army Brig. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sinclair, left, leaves a Fort Bragg courthouse with a member of his defense team, Maj. Elizabeth Ramsey.

(AP Photo/Andrew Craft)

markable admission sure to end the military career of a man once regarded as a rising star among the Army's small cadre of trusted battle commanders.

The case against Brig. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sinclair, believed to be the most senior mem-

ber of the U.S. military ever to face trial on sexual assault charges, comes as the Pentagon grapples with revelations of rampant rape and sexual misconduct within the ranks. The bill was firmly opposed by the Pentagon.

In his immaculate blue

from the claims of a female captain who said he twice forced her to perform oral sex. But by pleading guilty to the lesser charges, Sinclair's lawyers believe they will strengthen his case at trial by potentially limiting some of the salacious

P&G says Ohio HQ security tightened

DAN SEWELL
Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Procter & Gamble Co. has tightened security at its Cincinnati headquarters after a breach that allowed an eye-catching protest by Greenpeace activists this week, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

Using zip lines, nine environmental activists unfurled huge banners from the 12th floor of P&G's corporate offices Tuesday, criticizing the consumer product company's use of palm oil from a supplier that Greenpeace says it tied to tropical forest destruction in Indonesia. Authorities were stunned

that the activists were able to carry out their protest from inside a company known for stringent security to protect both its personnel and innovations in best-selling brands such as Tide detergent and Pampers diapers.

"Our global security team is crackerjack, and they have already taken steps to better secure the area," spokeswoman Lisa Popyk said.

She declined to disclose the changes, and said she didn't know whether anyone had been disciplined for the breach.

But she did provide new details on how the protest-

ers gained entry. She said the company determined from its initial investigation that one activist claimed to have an appointment.

Dressed in unobtrusive business clothes, he then let in the others through another door, she said. They carried their protest materials, including a tiger costume, in what Popyk called "inconspicuous bags."

"It was very clever, and well-planned," she said.

She said P&G has surveillance cameras throughout its buildings and was still reviewing them.

Police arrested the activists on burglary and vandalism charges. □

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Survey shows cost a growing factor in college decisions

LISA LEFF

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A new survey of first year U.S. college students has found that the percentage attending their first-choice school has reached its lowest level in almost four decades, as cost and the availability of financial aid have come to play an influential role in decisions of where to enroll.

The annual survey released Wednesday, conducted by University of California Los Angeles' Higher Education Research Institute, found that while more than three-quarters of those who started college last fall were admitted to the school they most wanted to attend, only 57 percent ended up going to their top school. That was the lowest rate in the 39 years that the institute has asked first year students if they enrolled at their dream college.

Kevin Eagan, the institute's interim managing director and an assistant professor at UCLA, said the cost of attending college appears

to be largely responsible for the decline. A record 46 percent of students reported that cost was a very important factor in where they ended up, compared with 31 percent nine years

ago.

"The difficult financial decisions that students and their families have to make about college are becoming more evidence," Eagan said. "Colleges that



Prospective students tour Georgetown University's campus in Washington. A new survey of first year U.S. college students has found that the percentage attending their first-choice school has reached its lowest level in almost four decades, as cost and the availability of financial aid have come to play an influential role in decisions of where to enroll.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

ago. Meanwhile, the share of respondents who said being offered financial aid was a crucial factor in the decision to enroll at their current campus reached 49 percent — an all-time

high. "The difficult financial decisions that students and their families have to make about college are becoming more evidence," Eagan said. "Colleges that

can reduce net costs to families are gaining an edge in attracting students." Although many colleges are turning to online courses as a way to re-

duce costs and the time it takes to earn a degree, the survey showed that the idea was not very popular with students. Fewer than 7 percent indicated there was a very good chance they would take an online course offered by their college.

The percentage was twice as high, however, among students at historically black colleges and universities.

Other key findings:

— A career in business remained the top post-college path among first year students, with 13 percent expressing interest in pursuing a career as an entrepreneur, accountant, executive, manager, consultant or administrative assistant or in the fields of human resources, sales and marketing, finance, real estate and sports management. Ten percent said they want to be doctors; 7 percent engineers; 5 percent classroom teachers; 4 percent actors, artists and musicians; and 3 percent lawyers or judges.

— More students think that peers who entered the United States illegally as children should have the right to a public education. This year, 41 percent agreed with the statement that such immigrants should be denied an education, a drop of 16 percentage points since 1996, when the institute first included the question in the survey in 1996.

— First year students also showed strong support for gay men and lesbians who want to adopt children. More than 83 percent said they think gay people should have the right to adopt.

— While college campuses are often thought to be hotbeds of radical politics, only 3 percent of the survey respondents described their political leanings as far-left, and only 2 percent as far-right.

More students, 46 percent, regarded their political beliefs as middle-of-the-road, while 28 percent saw themselves as liberal and 21 percent conservative. □

US productivity slows in 4Q

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. productivity grew at an even slower annual rate than previously thought in the final three months of last year.

Economists are hoping productivity growth will revive in 2014, reflecting a stronger economy.

Productivity grew at an annual rate of 1.8 percent in the October-December quarter, a slowdown from 3.5 percent productivity growth in the third quarter, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The new estimate was lower than the 3.2 percent gain the government had previously reported. Unit labor costs dipped 0.1 percent, a smaller drop than the 1.6 percent drop previously estimated.

For the year, productivity increased a tiny 0.5 percent, continuing a weak trend seen over the past three years. Analysts are

forecasting a rebound in productivity this year, helped by stronger economic growth.

Productivity is the amount of production per hour of output. The downward revision for the fourth quarter reflected that output, as measured by the gross domestic product, was lowered from the government's initial estimate.

The fourth quarter growth rate for GDP, the nation's total output of goods and services, was revised to 2.4 percent, down from the previous estimate of a 3.2 percent growth rate. With less output, productivity was revised lower.

The 0.5 percent rise in productivity for all of 2013 was down from a 1.5 percent increase in 2012. It was the weakest annual performance since an identical 0.5 percent rise in 2011. Labor costs edged up a slight 1.1 percent in 2013, continuing a trend of modest gains in labor costs. □



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US Financial Front:

Stock and housing gains put US net worth at record



A real estate services sign hangs in front of a house in Mount Lebanon, Pa. A surging stock market and rebounding home prices boosted Americans' wealth to a record in the final three months of last year, though both trends have slowed so far in 2014.

(AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar)

CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A surging stock market and rebounding home prices

boosted Americans' wealth to a record in the final three months of last year, though both trends have slowed so far in 2014.

U.S. household net worth jumped nearly \$3 trillion during last year's fourth quarter to \$80.7 trillion. Stock and mutual fund portfolios gained nearly \$1.7 trillion, or 9 percent, according to a Thursday report by the Federal Reserve.

The value of Americans' homes rose just over \$400 billion, a 2 percent gain. And checking account balances, pensions plan assets and retirement savings, also increased.

Strong wealth gains tend to trigger more consumer spending, a critical fuel for economic growth. Higher household net worth is one reason economists have forecast that the U.S. economy will accelerate

later this year. Household wealth, or net worth, reflects the value of homes, stocks, bank accounts and other assets minus mortgages, credit cards and other debts. Last year, U.S. home prices nationwide rose by the most in eight years. And the Standard & Poor's 500 index of large stocks jumped 32 percent. So far this year, home-price gains have slowed, and the S&P 500 has risen just 1.4 percent.

Rising home prices are helping people rebuild ownership stakes in their homes. The equity that Americans as a whole have in their homes has reached 51.7 percent, the highest point since before the recession

began. That's up from a record low of 36.5 percent in the first three months of 2009. The Great Recession hammered Americans' net worth, cutting their overall wealth to \$55.6 trillion in the first quarter of 2009. That was 19 percent below the pre-recession peak of \$68.8 trillion. U.S. wealth has since recovered. But households haven't benefited equally. Much of the rebound stems from stock market gains. Yet roughly 10 percent of households own about 80 percent of stocks. Most middle-class wealth stems from home ownership, and house prices nationwide remain below the peak reached in the spring of 2006. □

U.S. applications for jobless aid reach three-month low

JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits dropped 26,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 323,000, the lowest level in three months as layoffs remain at pre-recession levels.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the four-week average of applications, a less volatile measure, fell slightly to a seasonally adjusted 336,500. That average indicates that companies are cutting few jobs and anticipate steady economic growth despite the winter slowdown. Applications are a rough proxy for layoffs.

A total of 3.4 million Americans received unemployment benefits as of Feb. 15 — the latest period for

which figures are available — down from 3.49 million the previous week.

On Friday, the Labor Department will release its February jobs report after what has been a sluggish winter for the economy. Employers added just 113,000 jobs in January. That followed a gain of only 75,000 in December. Those figures are about half the monthly pace of the past two years.

Economists have estimated that 145,000 jobs were added last month. But there are signs that this forecast might be optimistic after a pair of lackluster reports released Wednesday suggested that winter storms hampered hiring in February. A survey by payroll processor ADP said private businesses added just 139,000 jobs last month. □

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Elusive Silicon Valley boom drives American income gap

MARTHA MENDOZA

AP National Writer

SAN JOSE, California (AP)

— Arwin Buditom guards some of the most success-

make ends meet anymore. Buditom rooms with his sister an hour's drive from work. Farfan gets his groceries at a food pantry.

Silicon Valley is entering a fifth year of unfettered growth. The median household income is \$90,000, according to the Census Bu-

their banner.

Farfan, 44, a native of the valley, said he figured he must be mismanaging his \$23-an-hour salary to be struggling with what seemed like a decent paycheck. But when he met with financial counselors, they told him there was nothing left to cut except groceries because rent, child support and transportation expenses were eating away the rest of his money.

Buditom, also 44, said the reality of working for some of the nation's richest companies has sapped his belief in the American dream. For the past four years, he has been living in his sister's apartment, commuting an hour in stop-and-go traffic for a \$13-an-hour security job.

"I'm so passed over by the American dream, I don't even want to dream it anymore," said Buditom, who immigrated from Indonesia 30 years ago. "It's impossible to get ahead. I'm just trying to survive."

From the White House to the Vatican to the world's business elite, the growing gap between the very wealthy and everyone else is seizing agendas. Three decades ago, Americans' income tended to grow at roughly similar rates, no matter how much they made. But since about 1980, income has grown most for the top earners. For the poorest 20 percent of families, it's dropped.

A study last month by the Brookings Institution found that among the nation's 50 largest cities, San Francisco experienced the largest increase in income inequality between 2007 and 2012. The richest 5 percent of households earned \$28,000 more, while the poorest 20 percent of households saw income drop \$4,000. To the south, Silicon Valley's success has made it a less hospitable place for many, said Russell Hancock, president of Joint Venture Silicon Valley, an organization focused on the local economy and quality of life.

"We've become a bifurcated valley, a valley of

haves and have-nots," Hancock said. "The economy is sizzling any way you slice it, and it's about to get hotter. But having said that, we are quick to point out there are perils to our prosperity."

Once a peaceful paradise of apricot, peach and prune orchards, the region is among the most expensive places to live in the U.S. Those earning \$50,000 a year in Dallas would need to make \$77,000 a year in the Silicon Valley to maintain the same quality of life, according to the Council for Community and Economic Research; \$63,000 if they moved from Chicago or Seattle.

Housing costs are largely to blame. An \$800-a-month, two-bedroom apartment near AT&T's Dallas headquarters would cost about \$1,700 near Google's Mountain View, California, headquarters. Dental visits, hamburgers, washing machine repairs, movie tickets — all are above national averages.

Five years ago Sacred Heart was providing food and clothing for about 35,000 individuals a year. This year it expects to serve more than twice that. On one brisk morning recently, families, working couples, disabled people and elderly lined up out the door for free bags of food, just miles from the bustling tech campuses.

Those firms, meantime, are increasingly opting to build their own infrastructure rather than depend on public systems and have become social bubbles, with their own child-care centers, cafes, dry cleaning services, gyms, onsite health providers and hair salons. eBay changes its employees' oil; Facebook repairs their bikes. Some of those workers are in-house, with good salaries and benefits. Others are contracted out.

The companies have also put some money back into the communities. In the past three years, Google has given nearly \$60 million to area nonprofits, including Second Harvest Food Bank. □



A family receives aid at a food pantry at Sacred Heart Community Service in San Jose, Calif. Silicon Valley is entering its fifth year of unfettered growth, with among the highest incomes in the U.S. and the largest share of high-growth, high-wage jobs. Those gains have doubled housing costs in the past five years while wages for low and middle skilled workers are stagnant. Homelessness and racial disparities are on the rise.

(AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

ful high-tech firms in America. Joseph Farfan keeps their heat, air and electric systems humming. But these workers and tens of thousands like them who help fuel the Silicon Valley's tech boom can't even

"It's unbelievable until you're in the middle of it," Farfan said, standing in line at the Sacred Heart Community Center in San Jose for free pasta, rice and vegetables. "Then the reality hits you."

reau. The average single-family home sells for about \$1 million. The airport is adding an \$82 million private jet center.

But the river of money flowing through this 1,800-square-mile (5,000-sq. kilometer) peninsula, stretching from south of San Francisco to San Jose, has also driven housing costs to double in the past five years while wages for low- and middle-skilled workers are stagnant. Nurses, preschool teachers, security guards and landscapers commute for hours from less-expensive inland suburbs.

Now the widening income gap between the wealthy and those left behind is sparking debate, anger and sporadic protests. Rants against the rich were spray-painted last month on walls, garages and a car in the Silicon Valley town of Atherton, home to many top tech CEOs that Forbes magazine last year called the nation's most expensive community. In Cupertino, security guards rallied outside Apple's shareholder meeting on Feb. 28 demanding better wages. "What's the matter with Silicon Valley? Prosperity for some, poverty for many. That's what," read



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Niger extradites a son of Gadhafi to Libya

DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK
© 2014 New York Times

CAIRO - Niger on Thursday extradited Saadi Gadhafi, the third son of Moammar Gadhafi, back to Libya, where he is accused of participating in the corruption and abuses of his father's 40-year rule.

The transitional government in Libya has sought Gadhafi and other fugitive members of his family since the rebels toppled Gadhafi three years ago. The transitional government has shown little progress in building a credible or independent judiciary that might handle such high-profile cases, to say nothing of the problems it has found in creating a professional army, police force or prison system.

Niger's justice minister, Marou Amadou, said his country had accepted Gadhafi and members of his entourage "for humanitarian reasons, on the basis of certain conditions which unfortunately were not respected."

"They were enjoined to stay quiet and do nothing to destabilize Libya. And

unfortunately, the Libyans gave us lots of information that they were not staying quiet," he said. "We couldn't keep harboring people who were taking actions that destabilized Libya." He did not specify what those actions were.

Ali Zeidan, the Libyan prime minister, said in a statement that the transitional government had taken custody of Gadhafi. An independent militia loosely allied with the government posted pictures on the Internet of him in a blue jumpsuit - one of him with a beard, one of him without a beard and one of him getting his head shaved.

Unlike others in his family, Saadi Gadhafi, who fled to Niger in 2011, was never a major player in his father's governing or business elite. He was best known as a former professional soccer player, team owner and playboy.

Among the accusations against Gadhafi is that he ordered security forces to fire on protesters in Benghazi at the beginning of the uprising. He had been

sent there by his father to attempt to calm the situation and had promised to

of firearms against soccer fans at a stadium in Tripoli, the capital, in the early

ward with plans to broker some kind of peace agreement involving reforms and



In this undated photo, al-Saadi Gadhafi, son of the late Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, watches a military exercise in Zlitan, Libya. Al-Saadi fled to Niger in September 2011 and the government there gave him refugee status but under house arrest. On March 6, he was handed over by Niger to Libya where he was transferred to a Tripoli prison, appeared in pictures posted on one militia Facebook page in a blue prison uniform while guards shaved his head and beard.

(AP Photo/Abdel Magid al-Fergany)

turn the city into a new San Diego. He is also believed to have ordered the use

2000s. During the uprising that ended his father's rule, he tried at times to step for-

a political transition, but his ideas never got far on either side. □

2 dead in Venezuela clash at barricade

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— A National Guardsman and a civilian were killed Thursday in a clash between residents of a Caracas neighborhood and armed men who tried to remove a barricade, Venezuelan officials said.

National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello identified the guardsman as 25-year-old Acner Isaac Lopez Lyon, and said that motorcycle taxi driver Jose Gregorio Amaris was also killed while removing debris from the road.

Both were apparently shot Thursday morning after area residents began

banging pots and throwing bottles at people taking down a street barricade. The opposition accuses the government of using armed civilian groups on motorcycles to break up demonstrations.

Just before the deaths were announced, the country's chief prosecutor said the death toll from the protests stood at 19 after weeks of student-led protests.

Barricades of garbage, furniture and burning fires have become a daily occurrence, snarling traffic in cities. In a televised speech at a new govern-

ment apartment building attended by actor Danny Glover, President Nicolas Maduro said the motorcyclist was removing debris so he could go about his job. After he was shot, the National Guard arrived to secure the area and Lopez Lyon was killed.

Maduro said a second motorcyclist was also seriously injured.

"Where are the opposition politicians to condemn these events, to search for peace like we're searching?" Maduro asked. He called those building the barricades "vandals who hate the people." □

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Al-Qaida in Yemen kills comrade accused of spying

AHMED AL-HAJ
Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Al-Qaida militants in Yemen killed one of their own men Thursday, hanging his body from a street light after accusing him of spying for the United States, officials said. The officials say a militant firing squad killed the man and publicly displayed his body in the town of Shahr in the southeastern Hadramawt province. An al-Qaida flier distributed to residents described the execution as "retribution" for anyone who deals with the Americans.

It claimed the man, who was not identified, had been placing microchips in cars and safe houses used by al-Qaida members to guide missiles fired by U.S. drones. Al-Qaida wields significant power in some remote areas of southern Yemen, where state authority is almost non-existent. The United States has carried drone strikes killing and injuring suspected al-Qaida militants. Officials have said that locals on the ground help locate militants for U.S. drones.

Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula is considered by the U.S. to be the terror group's most dangerous offshoot. The group controls large territories in Yemen after the country's 2011 uprising. A U.S.-backed military offensive has managed to drive militants out of main cities and towns, though the group continues to pose a major challenge to the government. Al-Qaida militants have carried several massive suicide attacks, including a December assault on the country's Defense Ministry

headquarters that killed 56 people, including foreigners. Meanwhile Thursday, gunmen on a motorcycle killed senior intelligence officer Col. Hamed al-Uzari in drive-by shooting as the officer left his house in the capital, Sanaa, officials said. Yemen President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi sent his condolences to the family of the slain officer, according to an official statement. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief journalists. □

World diplomats seek to stabilize country of Libya

LARA JAKES
AP National Security Writer

ROME (AP) — World diplomats worked Thursday to help Libya create a stable government and more secure environment amid the violence and growing political tensions that have festered since Moammar Gadhafi's regime crumbled in 2011. The meeting of foreign ministers, mostly from the West and Gulf states, focused largely on easing disagreements among Libya's diverse tribal, religious and ethnic populations, looking toward writing a new constitution and holding elections this year. The ministers are also working to secure weapons and ammunition left over from the Gadhafi regime to help bring more security to the country.

"Those mostly uncontrolled materials are a threat to the entire region," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told the conference, adding that Germany and France are allocating several million euros for the weapons-securing project this year. Three years after Gadhafi's ouster and slaying, Libya's central government still has little authority. The military and police are in disarray, outmanned and outgunned by rival militias who frequently take over state facilities. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Libya is at "really a pivotal moment" and pledged to help the country move toward national reconciliation and elections while it drafts a new constitution. "Libyans did not risk their lives in the 2011 revolution just to slip backward into thuggery and violence," Kerry told reporters hours after meeting Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zidan and Nouri Abu Sahmein, the Islamist-leaning president of Libya's parliament. "And we will continue to work closely to fight terrorism to prevent the spread of conventional weapons and to secure those weapons where they should be secured and to build democratic institutions," Kerry said. □

Tunisia ends state of emergency after 3 years

BOUAZZA BEN BOUAZZA
Associated Press

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — Tunisia's president on Thursday lifted the state of emergency that has been in place since the outbreak of a popular revolution three years ago, and a top military chief said soldiers stationed in some of the country's most sensitive areas will return to their barracks.

The decree from President Moncef Marzouki said the state of emergency ordered in January 2011 is lifted across the country immediately.

The state of emergency was imposed by longtime President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and maintained after he was overthrown. It was repeatedly renewed. Lifting the state of emergency is a positive sign for Tunisian and foreign investors, Finance Minister Hakim Ben Hammouda said on Radio Mosaique. The end of a state of emergency could also help lure tourists back to the Mediterranean country. The thriving tourist industry was devastated after the revolution and is only slowly clawing its way back. In Washington, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki acknowledged the positive message. "We welcome this positive development and will continue to support Tunisia as it moves forward with its democratic transition," Psaki told reporters. At the start, the state of

emergency included a curfew and a ban on meetings of more than three people, but it was relaxed over time. However it has continued to give the military and police special powers to intervene in un-

told The Associated Press that soldiers deployed in force across Tunisia would return to their barracks. After the end of the dictatorship that touched off the Arab Spring uprisings across the region, Tun-

movement and the assassination of two left-wing politicians. A major trouble spot remains an extremist base near Tunisia's border with Algeria, which is working with its neighbor to stamp out crossings be-



Tunisian soldiers guard the entrance of Tunis' main thoroughfare, Thursday, March 6, 2014. Tunisia's president on Thursday lifted the state of emergency that has been in place since the outbreak of a popular revolution three-years ago, and a top military chief said soldiers stationed in some of the country's most sensitive areas will return to their barracks.

(AP Photo/Hassene Dridi)

rest or security threats. Tunisia has been battling al-Qaida linked and other extremists since the revolution, but officials said the security situation has improved recently. Col. Maj. Mokhtar Ben Nasr

sians brought a moderate Islamist party into power allied with two other secular parties. But the coalition struggled in the face of continuing social unrest, high unemployment, the rise of a radical Islamist

tween the countries. Despite that, Tunisia remains a regional bright spot, since its fractious elected assembly finally wrote and passed a progressive constitution earlier this year. □



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European Central Bank holds rates amid recovery

DAVID McHUGH
AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)

— The European Central Bank kept its key interest rate on hold Thursday and raised its economic growth forecasts as it acknowledged that the recovery is strengthening in the 18 countries that use the euro. The euro jumped as markets took the bank's inaction and the comments from its president, Mario Draghi, as a sign that the top monetary authority for the eurozone might not take further steps to stimulate the economy.

"Amid a gradually firming recovery, the ECB sees no need to act," analyst Christian Schulz at Berenberg Bank in London wrote in a research note. "Draghi also gave no indication today that the ECB may ease policy again in the foreseeable future."

After the decision to keep the key rate at a record low of 0.25 percent, Draghi said the bank had raised its projection for economic growth to 1.2 percent this year, up slightly from the 1.1 percent estimate made in December.

The euro rose sharply, gaining a cent against the dollar to trade around \$1.3840. Expectations that the central bank will not cut rates tend to boost the euro, since that means higher returns on interest-bearing investments.

Yet Draghi warned that the economy still had so much slack to take up that the ECB's stimulus policies of low rates and easy credit to banks "will continue even though we see improvements in the economy." The eurozone grew 0.3 percent in the fourth quarter but unemployment remains high at 12 percent. The ECB trimmed its infla-

tion forecast for this year, to 1 percent from 1.1 percent, and to only 1.5 percent in 2016. That is well below the bank's goal of just under 2 percent. But it said inflation will rise steadily to 1.7 percent by the last quarter of 2016.

Some economists worry the eurozone might fall into deflation, a sustained drop in prices that can choke growth, though the ECB has said it doesn't expect that. Inflation in February was only 0.8 percent. However, the core rate, which excludes volatile food and fuel costs, has edged higher.

Japan fell into deflation in the 1990s but Draghi drew an extended contrast between Europe and Japan, arguing they were different. Inflation expectations remained steady in the eurozone, "and that was not the case in Japan," he said, adding the ECB was not being complacent.

Some analysts were expecting the ECB to trim its deposit rate below zero, effectively penalizing banks for holding money

at the ECB instead of lending it. Others thought it might stop taking weekly deposits from banks, which would cause an increase in the amount of money in the financial system.

A more far-reaching measure would be large-scale

purchases of financial assets such as government bonds with newly created money, as the U.S. Federal Reserve has done. That would increase the amount of money in the economy and aim to lower market interest rates. But such a

move faces legal, political and technical obstacles in a currency union with 18 members.

Draghi said all those steps remained under consideration but would take time to study: "These projects have not been shelved." □



President of European Central Bank Mario Draghi is on his way to a news conference in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, March 6, 2014, following a meeting of the ECB governing council. The European Central Bank has kept its main interest rate at a record low of 0.25 percent, holding off on more stimulus as economic indicators suggest the modest recovery is gaining strength.

(AP Photo/Michael Probst)

North Korea rejects plans for more reunions

CHOE SANG-HUN
© 2014 New York Times

SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea on Thursday rejected South Korea's proposal to hold Red Cross talks to discuss holding more family reunions where relatives separated by the Korean War could meet their long-lost family members for the first time in six decades.

Late last month, the two Koreas held such reunions for the first time in three years, raising hopes for improved ties on the divided Korean Peninsula. But the North has since raised tensions again by testing several short-

range ballistic missiles and rockets since last Thursday. In its latest such test, North Korea launched four projectiles from its newly developed multiple-rocket launcher Tuesday, with one flying in the area of a passenger plane at roughly the same time.

The plane, a China Southern Airlines jet with 220 passengers on board, was flying from Tokyo to the Chinese city of Shenyang when it passed through the same sky off the east coast of North Korea that the rockets traveled Tuesday, military officials here said.

The plane flew at an altitude of 33,000 feet when it crossed the trajectory of one of the rockets that had flown by several minutes earlier, they said.

The North's failure to notify international aviation personnel of its tests in advance was a "provocation that violated the norms of international air traffic and posed a serious threat to the safety of civilians," Kim Min-seok, a spokesman of the Defense Ministry in Seoul, said Wednesday.

But North Korea dismissed the criticism Wednesday, calling its missile and rocket

tests "defensive actions" and boasting that its projectiles hit targets with precision while posing no threat to international air traffic.

Beijing, North Korea's last remaining major ally, has not yet reacted to the incident.

On Thursday, North Korea told the South that the "circumstance and mood" were not right to discuss further family reunions, in an apparent reference to the joint military exercises the United States and South Korea have been conducting since Feb. 24. □



Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez speaks during a press conference in Havana, Cuba, Thursday, March 6, 2014. Cuba officially accepted an invitation from the European Union to normalize its political dialogue between the two sides.

(AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Cuba accepts negotiations with EU

PETER ORSI

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba's foreign minister on Thursday formally accepted a European Union invitation to begin talks on improving ties, and expressed concern over upheaval in key ally Venezuela and in Ukraine.

At a news conference in Havana, Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said Cuba had notified the EU of its decision earlier in the day. He said diplomats will work with Brussels to determine the details and dates for negotiations.

"I think this correct decision by the EU demonstrates that unilateral policies do not work, nor do they have a place in our time," Rodriguez said.

Cuba-EU relations turned chilly in 1996 when the bloc adopted the so-called Common Position linking ties to human rights, political opening and civil liberties on the island.

The EU resumed low-level contacts with Cuba in 2008, two years after Raul

Castro took over from his older brother Fidel and started granting Cubans more freedom, including the right to travel and buy property. EU officials announced last they would seek to upgrade ties with Cuba, but cautioned that they would still demand more progress on rights.

Rodriguez said Havana is willing to talk about any issue. "Cuba is disposed to discussing, on a basis of equality, sovereignty and mutual respect, whatever matter including those of human rights, about which it has many concerns over what is happening in various European countries," the foreign minister said.

Rodriguez reiterated Havana's support for the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, whose nation sends Cuba billions of dollars in oil each year on preferential terms. Venezuela has seen weeks of daily protests by government opponents, and on Wednesday Maduro announced he would break political and economic

relations with Panama. He accused the Central American nation of working with Washington to act against his government, after Panama asked for the Organization of American States to discuss the situation in Venezuela. Rodriguez denounced what he called "attempts to destabilize and violently oust the (Venezuelan) government through the interference and intrusion of foreign powers, in particular the United States government." He also backed Russia on Ukraine, placing blame for the crisis on the West.

"We cannot accept the violent overthrow of a constitutional government at the cost of dozens of deaths and wounded through an intervention by the United States and some of its NATO allies," Rodriguez said, "through threats to the physical integrity of Ukrainian citizens due to their national origin, and the destruction of institutions, political parties and legitimate and legally recognized entities." □

Conservationists try to save sharks from Trinidad's bite

DAVID McFADDEN

Associated Press

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)

— Conservationists said Wednesday they have launched a shark-saving campaign in the Caribbean country of Trinidad & Tobago, trying to stop locals and tourists from eating a popular delicacy: deep-fried shark sandwiches.

Many have long considered "bake & shark" sandwiches to be an essential part of a visit to Trinidad's popular Maracas beach, a white-sand strip lined with shacks serving fried juvenile shark and bread smothered in a variety of toppings such as mango chutney and tamarind sauce.

But the local Papa Bois Conservation group is now pushing for a ban on the catch and trade of the marine predators to help protect a fast-dwindling population. It started its campaign during Trinidad's famed Carnival celebrations, which ended at midnight. Supporters have rallied on the traffic-jammed road to Maracas carrying placards made in the shape of sharks with messages like "Save our sharks, save our oceans."

Group director Marc de Verteuil acknowledged Wednesday that the sandwiches are something "Trinidadians are very proud of; it is practically a national dish. But at the same time, most people simply don't understand that sharks are

in crisis." Researchers with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature say one-quarter of the world's sharks and rays are threatened with extinction. De Verteuil said overfishing in local waters has gotten so bad that much of the shark meat may now be imported. Shark fillets are also sold in supermarkets and upscale restaurants here, and environmentalists say the waters of the small twin-island country of 1.3 million people also play an outsized role in supplying shark fins for a soup popular in China.

The most recent data collected from the Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong, a major global trade hub for shark fin, ranked Trinidad & Tobago as the biggest fin exporter to the Asian city. Much of the 332,396 kilograms (732,808 pounds) of shark fin exported from Trinidad to Hong Kong in 2011 were from creatures caught as by-catch by international fishing boats in the Atlantic. When the fleet of mostly Asian long-liners arrives in Trinidad's waters with Atlantic-caught shark, they can land it at a Trinidad free zone and then export the fins to Hong Kong. "If local consumption and exports can be reduced or prohibited, Trinidad has an opportunity to be part of the solution in protecting these endangered species," □



A "bake & shark" sandwich is presented in Trinidad.

(Handout Photo)

Haiti's Mevs leaves Clinton investment board

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

— A prominent Haitian businessman has left the presidential advisory board he co-chairs with former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

A spokesman for the Presidential Advisory Council for Economic Growth said Thursday that Gregory Mevs has resigned after two years presiding over

the 33-member board with Clinton. Spokesman Stan Wojewodzki said that the council is seeking a new co-chairman.

Mevs had traveled extensively to promote investment in Haiti as co-chair of the council. The council also authored a tax incentive program for homebuilders following the Janu-

ary 2010 earthquake.

The council has seen some internal turmoil with the dismissal of the executive secretary in November and the layoffs of five staff in December.

Wojewodzki says Mevs is leaving to spend more time with his family and businesses, which include shipping and manufacturing. □



Real Island Life: Notes From A Day On Aruba!



PALM BEACH - First of all, I like to welcome you to my island in the sun. Aruba's weather is always so predictable (hot and windy) and that might be the main reason you decided to come visit us. Of course besides the sun there is much more like: beaches, restaurants, shopping, gambling, activities and more. Talking about all those fun things to do here, if you live on the island full time, and work every day, you might forget that we truly live in a paradise. Of course on your off day you might go swimming or drive around but it is after a few more days at home when you start realizing how beautiful our island really is. So I took some time to "smell the ocean breeze"..... I truly think that all locals should do so, once in a

while, to appreciate where we live and what we have. Enjoy breakfast outside in your patio or yard. Breathe in and out.... Let it sink in a little. No rush and no hurry. Take time to enjoy your fresh squeezed lemon juice from your backyard trees with a fish omelet (left over's from last night's incredible catch of the day). Grab an ice cooler, fill it up with anything you like to drink cold, and start driving. Of course you can get in an air-conditioned car, but that is not the real thing. So I choose to get on my Rewaco trike, a Harley Davidson look alike on three wheels. In that case all you need is to protect yourself with sun block because our sun is really strong! Packed with a towel and the ice cooler I started driving along the

coast line. Never realized how many different shades of blue really exist in the ocean. I counted at least 9 different types of blues-just like you see in famous movies like the "blue lagoon". First stop was the famous Charlie's Bar in San Nicolaas Main Street. Generation after generation of Charlie's have been running this cozy place, where you can spend hours looking around and identifying all the things visiting tourists have left behind to personalize the bar, like baseball caps, business cards, license plates and of course weird kind of souvenirs. Go check it out yourself..... Up to Baby Beach and Rogers beach. These are the places locals go. This is where we teach our kids to swim. Calm and shallow waters, lots of space to lay



out and catch some sun. If you pick a spot close to the Snack Container where they sell burger and refreshments you can enjoy 24-7 "golden oldies". Music you grew up with..... After a few hours of "vegging" on the beach staring at the turquoise ocean and listening to the birds that fly by and walk around it is time to get some food. Zeerovers in Savaneta is the place to go. Simple, clean and oh so good! The freshest fish on the island, brought in directly by our local fisherman. You or-

der by the piece and or pound and as little or as much as you want. The price for fish and chips is so good that you for sure would ask: "is that all"? No fancy dinner ware, just plain easy simple plastic but I promise you that you will be licking your fingers while enjoying a few drinks and the best sunset on the island, island style..... You see now that a day in Aruba can fly by as long as you have fun enjoy every moment of it. Yes, you are and i live in PARADISE!!!☐

Bugaloe's Special Guest Carol Likes It Hot Hot Hot!



PALM BEACH - Special guest of the week at Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill this week is Carol Ann Pugliese from New York. She's been coming to Aruba for 12 years, especially during Carnival season as she loves live music and loves to dance. That's also one of the reasons she's been coming back to Bugaloe Beach Bar for more than a decade - there is great food, plenty of drinks and live music 4 times a week. That will keep her dancing for hours on Bugaloe's breezy ocean pier.

Carol's dancing skills did not go unnoticed on Aruba.

During Carnival she danced all day and night long at the lighting parade and at the grand parade. She also was invited once to be a judge at Aruba's Youth Carnival Queen Election. During that big event Carol even showed her dancing moves on stage!

When asked about her favorite drink Carol states she favors a spicy Bloody Mary. "When I order my

drink I'll say I want a spicy Bloody Mary, spicy and hot like my men". To prove Carol truly likes it hot, hot, hot she once challenged Ricky, one of Bugaloe's staff members to have a hot pepper eating contest, which involved Aruba's madam Janet hot peppers and was too much fun.

Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill

takes her hat off for Carol, who got her master's degree from Iona College in 2005 while working a full time job and being a mother. We drink to that with a Bugaloe Cocktail of the Week, Munchi, consisting of vodka, apricot brandy and fruit punch. Cheers Carol, hope to see you back soon! □

On Saturday, March 8: Arikok proudly presents Movie Night At The Park!



SAN FUEGO, March 4 - Enjoy Aruba's National Park Arikok in a surprising way! On Saturday March 8 Arikok National Park presents its second "Movie Night at the Park" this year, showing documentaries with a focus on nature and the importance of nature conservation. During the upcoming movie night double episodes of the BBC Atlas of the Natural World - Wild South America series Lost Worlds and Mighty Amazon will be shown. Both series focus on wonderful footage and impressions of nature and wild life in South America (no narration). Visitors of all ages, tourists and locals alike, can enjoy this movie night in the magnificent setting of Aruba's national park, under a starlit sky. By offering this unique opportunity the Park aims to reach a broad

target group and create more awareness for the importance of nature.

The Movie Night at the Park is FREE of charge and takes place in front of the Visitor Center at the main entrance of the Park in San Fuego. A food and beverage stand is available, offering local drinks and snacks at a small fee. Chairs are provided, however you are allowed to bring your own chairs or blankets and your own picnic baskets as well. The Movie Night at the Park starts at 7:30pm and finishes at 9:30 pm.

The Arikok Facebook page provides a small trailer of the upcoming nature documentaries that will be shown at the Movie Night at the Park. For more information please visit Facebook.com/ArikokNationalPark. □

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Ravelli**

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2013

**CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET OF MADURO & CURIEL'S BANK N.V.
AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2013**

<i>(All amounts are expressed in thousands of Antillean Guilders)</i>		
	2013	2012
ASSETS		
Cash and due from banks	1,663,083	1,681,249
Investment securities	224,062	243,926
Loans and advances to customers	4,039,288	3,851,159
Investment in associate companies	763	770
Associate company held for sale	-	12,972
Bank premises and equipment	179,383	167,173
Customers' liability under acceptances	4,560	7,692
Other assets	69,111	78,644
TOTAL ASSETS	6,180,250	6,043,585
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Customers' deposits	5,210,446	5,135,810
Due to other banks	33,308	32,666
Acceptances outstanding	4,560	7,692
Deferred tax liability	5,982	6,120
Profit tax payable	42,907	35,689
Accrued interest payable	17,413	16,429
Provisions	69,808	61,854
Other liabilities	89,329	85,778
	5,473,753	5,382,038
Equity		
Issued capital	51,000	51,000
Fair value reserve investments	-	7,679
Other reserves	190,661	190,968
Retained earnings	452,592	400,986
	694,253	650,633
Minority interest	12,244	10,914
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	6,180,250	6,043,585

**CONSOLIDATED INCOME STATEMENT OF MADURO & CURIEL'S BANK N.V.
AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2013**

<i>(All amounts are expressed in thousands of Antillean Guilders)</i>		
	2013	2012
Interest income	318,391	309,628
Interest expense	20,053	19,777
Net interest income	298,338	289,851
Fee and commission income	181,126	171,640
Fee and commission expenses	62,781	57,359
Net fee and commission income	118,345	114,281
Income from foreign exchange transactions	49,217	48,327
Income from investment securities	9,538	7,213
Operating income	475,438	459,672
Salaries and other employee expenses	182,551	183,975
Occupancy expenses	24,311	23,317
Net impairment on loans and advances	13,476	11,032
Other operating expenses	64,115	63,525
Operating expenses	284,453	281,849
Net result from operations	190,985	177,823
Net income from associates	2,885	100
Net result before tax	193,870	177,923
Profit tax	47,263	34,247
NET RESULT AFTER TAX	146,607	143,676

Explanatory notes to the consolidated financial highlights as at December 31, 2013

A) ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. GENERAL

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. and its subsidiaries (the "Group") are set out below. These explanatory notes are an extract of the detailed notes included in the consolidated financial statements and are consistent in all material respects with those from which they have been derived.

2. BASIS OF PREPARATION

The consolidated financial statements, from which the consolidated financial highlights have been derived, are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRS").

The figures presented in these highlights are stated in thousands of Antillean Guilders and are rounded to the nearest thousand.

The policies used have been consistently applied by the Group and its subsidiaries and are consistent, in all material respects, with those used in the previous year.

For financial statement presentation purposes certain 2012 balances have been adjusted.

3. BASIS OF CONSOLIDATION

Subsidiaries are all entities over which the Group has the power to govern the financial and operating policies. Subsidiaries are fully consolidated from the date on which control is transferred to the Group until the date that control ceases. The following subsidiaries have been consolidated as of December 31, 2013.

- Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V. and subsidiaries
- The Windward Islands Bank Ltd.
- Maduro & Curiel's Bank (Bonaire) N.V. and subsidiary
- Maduro & Curiel's Insurance Services N.V.
- MCB Group Insurance N.V.
- Progress N.V.
- MCB Risk Insurance N.V.

ASSOCIATE COMPANIES

Associate companies are entities over which the Group has significant influence but not control. Investments in associate companies are accounted for under the equity method of accounting.

4. INVESTMENT SECURITIES

The Group classifies its investment securities in the following categories: financial assets at fair value through profit or loss, available-for-sale and held-to-maturity. Management determines the classification of its investment securities at initial recognition.

A security is classified in the category financial assets at fair value through profit or loss if acquired principally for the purpose of selling in the short term. Available-for-sale financial assets are investments intended to be held for an indefinite period of time, which may be sold in response to needs for liquidity or changes in fair values. Investment securities with fixed maturities where management has both the intent and ability to hold to maturity are classified as held-to-maturity.

Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss, financial assets available-for-sale and financial assets classified as held-to-maturity are initially recognized at cost. Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss and financial assets available-for-sale are subsequently carried at fair market value. Held-to-maturity securities are carried at amortized cost. Unlisted equity securities for which no readily available market exists, and for which other methods of reasonably estimating fair value are clearly inappropriate or unworkable, are carried at cost less impairment, if applicable.

The gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss are included in the income statement in the period in which they arise. The gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of available-for-sale financial assets are recognized directly in equity, until the financial asset is sold or impaired at which time the cumulative gain or loss previously recognized in equity should be recognized in the income statement. Dividends on available-for-sale financial assets are recognized in the income statement when the right to receive payment is established.

5. LOANS AND ADVANCES TO CUSTOMERS

Loans and advances are carried at amortized cost, less an allowance for loan impairment. An allowance for loan impairment is established if there is an indication that the Group will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original contractual loan terms.

B) SPECIFICATION OF ACCOUNTS

<i>(All amounts are expressed in thousands of Antillean Guilders)</i>		
	2013	2012
I ASSETS		
Investment securities		
Held-to-Maturity	212,899	226,639
Available-for-sale	-	8,682
Financial assets at fair value	11,163	8,605
TOTAL INVESTMENT SECURITIES	224,062	243,926
Loans and advances to customers		
Retail customers	1,641,789	1,567,944
Corporate customers	2,381,244	2,271,858
Public sector	16,096	8,034
Other	93,275	92,812
Gross loans and advances to customers	4,132,404	3,940,648
Less: allowance for loan impairment	(93,116)	(89,489)
NET LOANS AND ADVANCES TO CUSTOMERS	4,039,288	3,851,159
II LIABILITIES		
Customers' deposits		
Retail customers	2,080,051	1,996,051
Corporate customers	2,469,696	2,365,312
Other	660,699	774,447
TOTAL CUSTOMERS' DEPOSITS	5,210,446	5,135,810

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON
THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

To the Stockholders and Board of Directors of
Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V.

The accompanying consolidated financial highlights, which comprise the consolidated balance sheet as at December 31, 2013, the consolidated income statement for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. for the year ended December 31, 2013. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those consolidated financial statements in our report dated February 5, 2014. Those consolidated financial statements, and the consolidated financial highlights, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on those financial statements.

The consolidated financial highlights do not contain all the disclosures required by International Financial Reporting Standards. Reading the consolidated financial highlights, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS - Management is responsible for the preparation of the consolidated financial highlights derived from the audited consolidated financial statements in accordance with the Provisions for the Disclosure of Consolidated Financial Highlights of Domestic Banking Institutions, issued by the Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten ("CBCS").

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY - Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the consolidated financial highlights based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810, Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

OPINION - In our opinion, the consolidated financial highlights derived from the audited consolidated financial statements of Maduro & Curiel's Bank N.V. for the year ended December 31, 2013 are consistent, in all material respects, with those consolidated financial statements, in accordance with the Provisions for the Disclosure of Consolidated Financial Highlights of Domestic Banking Institutions, issued by the CBCS.

Curaçao, February 5, 2014
KPMG ACCOUNTANTS B.V.
M.L.M. Kesselaer RA

BALANCE SHEET AND EQUITY

- For financial statement presentation purposes, certain 2012 balances have been adjusted.
- MCB Group's total assets increased with a modest 2% or Naf. 137 million.
- The 8% decline in investment securities (Naf. 20 million) was caused by the sale of securities available-for-sale and the maturing of some Government bonds.
- Our "Loans and advances to customers" however, surpassed the 4 billion guilders mark for the first time in history by increasing Naf. 188 million (5%) to Naf. 4,039 million. This milestone was achieved despite slower credit growth in the Curaçao and Sint Maarten markets.
- Our shareholder's equity excluding minority interest was strengthened by Naf. 44 million (7%) remaining just shy of Naf. 700 million. This very strong capitalization continues to represent a key strength of our Group and one that our community, our clients and our staff can continue to rely and count on.

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

- The income streams continue to be well diversified.
- The Group's net result from operations for the first time was more than Naf. 190 million, through an increase of 7% or Naf. 13 million compared to 2012. Main drivers for this increase were the Naf. 16 million (3%) increase in operating income, combined with a mere Naf. 3 million (1%) increase in operating expenses.
- Net income after taxes increased 2% to Naf. 147 million.

LOANS

- The credit restrictions established in March 2012 by the Centrale Bank van Curaçao en Sint Maarten (CBCS) were continued, although since September 2013 a 3% growth in credit compared to August 2012, was allowed for a period of 6 months ending February 2014.
- However, taking the above measures into account, the retail customer portfolio as well as the corporate customer portfolio increased with 5%, in absolute terms Naf. 74 million and Naf. 109 million respectively.

TAXES

- MCB Group's profit tax obligation resulting from our operations was Naf. 47 million, while the Group also paid Naf. 4.7 million in turnover taxes. Our employees paid wage taxes amounting to Naf. 27.8 million, while social premiums paid was Naf. 22 million.
- MCB Group collects foreign exchange license fee/tax on behalf of the CBCS, and in turn remits it to the respective governments of Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In 2013 MCB collected and remitted Naf. 46 million in license fees for Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In Aruba, Caribbean Mercantile Bank collected Afl. 15 million in exchange tax which it in turn remitted to the Central Bank of Aruba for the government of Aruba.
- Together, the taxes and premiums mentioned above contributed Naf. 163 million to the public coffers of our countries.

EMPLOYMENT

- As at December 31, 2013, MCB Group employed 1,494 persons across all islands.
- During the year, MCB Group paid its employees Naf. 97 million in salaries, not including social benefits, pensions, medical and other insurances.

COMMUNITY

- As a socially responsible corporate member of the communities we serve, we always contribute in one way or another to important organizations, projects and events of a cultural, social, religious, sport, educational, and environmental nature benefiting our youth, neighborhoods and different charitable institutions. In 2013 on Curaçao alone, we contributed with more than 4,900 donations amounting to more than Naf. 2.7 million.
- During the year 2013 there were several events commemorating that 150 years before on July 1st, 1863 slavery was abolished in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. At the end of the year there were also events celebrating 200 years of existence of the Kingdom. Our Bank donated and sponsored several events related to these two important milestones in our history.
- We are very thankful to all our colleagues for their enthusiastic participation in giving back to our community. In the second week of December we celebrated the 9th annual "Siman di Kurason Positivo", whereby again more than 250 of our employees voluntarily provided direct social assistance to the less fortunate in our society. We also broke the record for most blood donated by a corporate citizen, and more than 70 new blood donors were registered.
- In the area of sports, in 2013 we became main sponsor of two of our country's main sports competitions: soccer through the Curaçao Soccer Federation (FFK) and women's softball through the Curaçao Softball Association. In this way we want to grow the sports on our island and give young women the opportunity to grow physically and emotionally and compete at higher levels locally as well as internationally.
- Fundashon Desarojo i Progreso is a foundation that cares for more than 2000 children between the ages of 6 and 11 in 21 different neighborhoods after school and helps and supports them to develop physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally and socially, for them to be able to participate in a positive way in our society. Because of the great work of the teachers and volunteers, the parents can remain calm at work. For this organization's continued extraordinary work, they received the well deserved 2013 MCB Prize.
- We were humbled and very honored when at the end of the year we received the prestigious "Solo di Oro" award whereby Radio Hoyer yearly awards persons or organizations that have contributed in a positive way to the development of Curaçao. We see it as a lifetime achievement award honoring all our colleagues that went before us in volunteering and supporting our community.














It looks as if the world economy and the economies of our islands are improving after some structural measures have been taken, to improve the government finances and prepare our countries for the challenges that undoubtedly lie ahead. We truly hope that the path forward has been found and that our countries will move "full steam ahead". We will continue to position our Bank to be able to anticipate changes in the environment, be flexible enough to make the changes in our organization and keep contributing to the communities we serve.

We are grateful to our clients, our employees, our shareholders, our supervisory directors, our regulators and especially the communities we serve for the support we enjoyed in 2013 and hope to be able to enjoy in 2014 and beyond.

Aruba



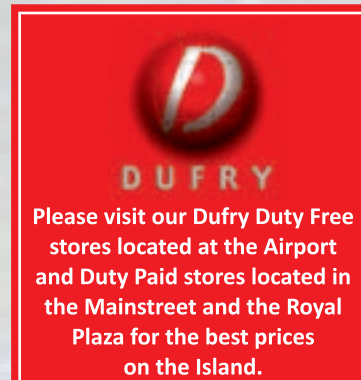
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1. Promenade



2. DUFRY





A slow start for Woods, and Cadillac Championship

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

DORAL, Florida (AP) — Tiger Woods only made it through 10 holes Thursday — this time because of the weather, not his back.

The debut of the new Blue Monster, and the return of Woods, received an incomplete grade Thursday when the opening round of the Cadillac Championship was halted more than two hours because of menacing thunderstorms. Harris English was among only six players who finished the round, hitting 5-iron into the par-3 ninth hole and rolling in a 45-foot birdie putt for a 3-under 69. The golf course and the world's No. 1 player showed enough.

Woods, who walked off after 13 holes Sunday in the Honda Classic because of lower back pain and spasms, said he warmed up well and felt good during the delay. His golf didn't look all that great. He was 2-over par through 10 holes, ending the day with a wedge that came up some 20 yards short of his target, leading to a three-putt for bogey from about 55 feet.

"I'm ready to go back out tomorrow and play well," he said.



Tiger Woods lines up his shot on the first hole as rain starts to fall during the first round of the Cadillac Championship golf tournament Thursday, March 6, 2014, Fla.

Associated Press.

Trump National Doral, completely overhauled by Gil Hanse, showed plenty of bite on a windy, cloudy afternoon. Jason Dufner was going along beautifully for 10 holes until he struggled to find fairways in a crosswind.

Brett Rumford began his round by hitting four shots before he put one in play. Three went into the water on the par-5 10th, and he started out with an 11.

Dufner, Hunter Mahan, Francesco Molinari and Patrick Reed also were at 3 under when the round was suspended by darkness. The 62 players who failed to finish will return Friday morning to complete the round.

Russell Henley, coming off a playoff win last week at the Honda Classic, made only one par in six holes on the back nine — two birdies, three bogeys.

He was in the group at 2 under that included Masters champion Adam Scott, who is in the Nos. 1-2-3 group with Woods and Henrik Stenson.

Stenson might have hit the most memorable shot of the day — a cold shank from the middle of the second fairway that sailed at a 45-degree angle into bushes.

Scott has a chance to replace Woods at No. 1 in the world if he wins this World Golf Championship and Woods finishes worse than fifth.

Rory McIlroy got off to a blazing start with four birdies in five holes, only to end the back nine with back-to-back bogeys with a long three-putt bogey and a tee shot on the 18th that caught the edge of the water and bounded into the hazard.

Continued on page 22



IBF light middleweight champ Molina jailed

KEN RITTER

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — IBF light middleweight champion Carlos Molina has been jailed in Las Vegas two days before a scheduled

In this Sept. 14, 2013, file photo, Carlos Molina celebrates after being declared the winner by split decision over Ishe Smith in a boxing bout in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

fight.

Molina is being held at Clark County jail on a federal immigration hold and a warrant accusing him of failing to register as a sex offender seven years ago in Wisconsin.

Las Vegas police Officer Laura Meltzer said on Thursday that Molina was arrested on Tuesday on a 2007 warrant from Outagamie County, Wisconsin.

Molina made an appearance on Thursday before a Las Vegas judge and tried to post \$10,000 bail. But Meltzer says his release was denied after Las Vegas police learned he was also sought by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Molina (22-5-2, 6 KOs) is scheduled to fight Jermall Charlo (17-0, 13 KOs) on Saturday. □

Stuard leads Puerto Rico Open by one stroke

RIO GRANDE, Puerto Rico (AP) — Brian Stuard birdied seven of his first 12 holes in windy conditions to take the first-round lead in the Puerto Rico Open on Thursday.

Stuard finished with a 6-under 66, dropping a stroke on the par-4 seventh hole — his 16th of the day — in gusts of up to 20 mph (32 kph) at Trump International Golf Club-Puerto Rico.

"Wind is blowing pretty good out there, so got to hit some good shots," Stuard said.

"I did well. I kept it in play nice off the tee, didn't get in much trouble, and only made the one bogey."

The highest ranked player in the field in the FedEx Cup standings at No. 13, Stuard finished second in November in the OHL Classic in Mexico.

He also had a strong run in January, finishing sixth in the Sony Open in Hawaii and sixth the next week in the Humana Challenge in California.

"I've just been playing pretty solid, but been putting well," Stuard said. "I putted really good to start off the year and then kind of last few weeks not quite as good and then good today."

Jason Gore and Danny Lee shot 67, and Y.E. Yang was another stroke back along with Ricky Barnes, William McGirt, Tim Petrovic, Chesson Hadley, Eric Axley and Ben Martin.

"It wasn't easy out there," Lee said.

"It was very windy, and there's some tough pin placements out there, but I played very smart today and I hit it where I wanted



U.S.' Chris Smith set his golf ball to putt on the ninth hole green during the first round of the Puerto Rico Open PGA golf tournament in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, Thursday, March 6, 2014.

Associated Press

to hit it, and I rolled it really nicely with the putter. It was a really good day for me."

Defending champion Scott Brown opened with a 70. Brooks Koepka, a field-high 70th in the world ranking,

shot 72. John Daly had a triple-bogey 7 on the par-4 12th hole in a round of 74. □

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NBA Capsules

Blazers rout Hawks 102-78; Korver's streak ends

PORTLAND, Oregon (AP) — Nicolas Batum had 14 points and a career-high 18 rebounds as the Portland Trail Blazers downed Atlanta 102-78, a loss that marked the end of Hawks guard Kyle Korver's NBA-record streak of 127 games with a 3-pointer.

Korver had surpassed Dana Barros' record of 89 straight, set from 1994-96, earlier this season. He was 0 for 5 from 3-point range against the Blazers.

Mo Williams added 15 points off the bench for Portland, which had six players in double figures. Portland, which led by as many as 29 points, has won six of its last seven games while keeping pace as one of the teams battling for the top four seeds in the West.

Cartier Martin had 16 points off the bench for the Hawks, who have lost four straight and 12 of their last 13 as they fight to stay in the Eastern Conference playoff picture.

BOBCATS 109, PACERS 87



Atlanta Hawks guard Kyle Korver sits on the bench during the final moments of an NBA basketball game against the Portland Trail Blazers in Portland, Ore., Wednesday, March 5, 2014. Korver's NBA-record streak of 127 games with a 3-pointer came to an end as he went 0-5 in the three point range against the Trail Blazers. Portland won 102-78.

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (AP) — Al Jefferson scored 34 points in Charlotte's vic-

tory over the Indiana Pacers that gave the Bobcats their fifth straight home win.

Jefferson was 16 of 25 from the field and had eight rebounds for the Bobcats (28-33), who equaled their combined win total from the previous two seasons. Jefferson, whose 38-point, 19-rebound effort Monday night was overshadowed by LeBron James' career-high 61-point outing, has scored at least 20 points in 21 of his last 24 games.

Charlotte became the first team since the 2009-10 Knicks to play the NBA's top four teams in consecutive games. They previously lost to San Antonio, Oklahoma City and Miami on the road.

Evan Turner had 22 points for the Pacers (46-15), who lost back-to-back games for only the second time this season.

ROCKETS 101, MAGIC 89
ORLANDO, Florida (AP) — James Harden scored 31 points, including 25 in the second half, as the Houston Rockets dug out of a double-digit, first-half hole to beat the Orlando Magic.

Houston trailed in the second quarter by as many as 14 points, but battled back to win for the 13th time in 15 outings.

Arron Afflalo led the Magic with 18 points. The Magic dropped to 0-2 this season against the Rockets. Orlando played without Jameer Nelson and Victor Oladipo. Nelson was out sick and Oladipo missed his first game of the season with soreness in his left ankle.

WARRIORS 108, CELTICS 88
BOSTON (AP) — Klay Thompson and David Lee scored 18 points each as the Golden State Warriors went a season-high 14 games over .500 with a romp over the Boston Celtics.

The Warriors scored the first six points, led 12-2 with just over five minutes gone and stayed ahead by at least 20 points throughout the second half.

Golden State had an easy time against one of the NBA's worst teams one night after beating one of

the best. Thompson's 12-foot turnaround with six-tenths of a second left had given the Warriors a 98-96 win at the Indiana Pacers, the league's top team at home.

Former Celtic Jordan Crawford had 15 points and Stephen Curry added 14 for the Warriors (38-24), who won for the seventh time in nine games.

Kelly Olynyk scored 19 points for Boston (20-41), which dropped its seventh game in its past eight.

WIZARDS 104, JAZZ 91
WASHINGTON (AP) — Trevor Ariza scored 26 points and Bradley Beal added 22 as the Washington Wizards took an early lead and never lost it, shooting 54 percent in a win over the Utah Jazz.

John Wall had 14 points and 10 assists, and Marcin Gortat had 16 points and nine rebounds for the Wizards, who have won seven of eight.

This one was noteworthy if only for substantial contributions from recent additions Drew Gooden and Andre Miller, two thirty-somethings who teamed up for a run that padded the lead in the first half.

Alec Burks scored 19 points, and Trey Burke added 14 to lead the Jazz, who have dropped the first four games of their six-game road trip. Their 7-24 road record is the worst in the Western Conference.

NETS 103, GRIZZLIES 94
NEW YORK (AP) — Joe Johnson scored 21 points, Marcus Thornton came off the bench for 20 as the Brooklyn Nets powered their way above .500 for the first time this season by beating the Memphis Grizzlies.

Deron Williams added 16 points and Paul Pierce 14 for the Nets (30-29), who have won four in a row overall and six straight at home in turning around a turbulent start.

Jason Collins played 17 scoreless minutes on the day he signed his second 10-day contract. □

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NHL Capsules

Canadiens outlast Ducks 4-3 for shootout victory



Canadian Olympic women's team goalie Shannon Szabados takes a water break during practice with the Edmonton Oilers NHL hockey team in Edmonton, Alberta, Wednesday, March 5, 2014. Oilers goaltender Ben Scrivens is at left facing the camera.
Associated Press

The Associated Press ANAHEIM, California (AP)

— Andrei Markov scored in the sixth round of the shootout as the Montreal Canadiens beat the NHL-leading Anaheim Ducks 4-3 Wednesday for their sixth victory in eight games.

Brendan Gallagher had a goal and an assist for the Canadiens, tying it late in the second period. Max Pacioretty got his 30th goal and captain Brian Gionta also scored in an impressive victory before the arrival of new acquisition Thomas Vanek.

Tim Jackman, Francois Beauchemin and Daniel Winnik scored early goals for the Ducks, who had won three straight. Jonas Hiller made 27 saves in Anaheim's first loss since the Olympic break.

Dustin Tokarski stopped 39 shots in his debut for the Canadiens, making several sharp saves in his eighth NHL appearance.

MAPLE LEAFS 3, RANGERS 2, OT

NEW YORK (AP) — Tyler Bozak scored from a penalty shot and then got the winning goal 1:51 into overtime to lift the Toronto Maple Leafs over the Rangers, spoiling the New York debut of Martin St. Louis.

Bozak got to a loose puck in front that bounced past Rangers defensemen Dan Girardi and Ryan McDonagh and slammed a shot past Henrik Lundqvist to snap the Maple Leafs' three-game losing streak (0-1-2) and stretch New York's skid to three (0-2-1). Toronto built a 2-0 lead on Bozak's second-period

goal and Nazem Kadri's tally in the third. The Rangers tied it on short-handed goals by McDonagh and Dominic Moore 1:19 apart. Lundqvist bounced back from two straight losses in which he gave up 10 goals, finishing with 26 saves. Toronto's Jonathan Bernier had dropped two straight after regulation while allowing nine goals. He stopped 35 shots.

FLYERS 6, CAPITALS 4
PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Claude Giroux and Jakub Voracek each had two goals, and Michael Raffl and Steve Downie also scored to lead Philadelphia.

Andrew McDonald had an assist in his first game since he was acquired from the New York Islanders. The Flyers won for the seventh time in eight games.

The Flyers chased Washington goalie Braden Holtby after taking a 4-0 lead early in the second period. Holtby was replaced by Philipp Grubauer for the rest of the game — and could face some competition the rest of the season. The Capitals acquired Jaroslav Halak from Buffalo for backup goalie Michal Neuvirth and defenseman Rostislav Klesla at the NHL trade deadline earlier in the day.

Alex Ovechkin, Joel Ward and Troy Brouwer nearly rallied the Capitals with three straight goals in the third. Brooks Laich also scored.

FLAMES 4, SENATORS 1
CALGARY, Alberta (AP) —

Markus Granlund scored his first NHL goal as fellow Finnish rookie Joni Ortio picked up his first career victory to lead Calgary. Paul Byron, Joe Colborne and Mike Cammalleri also scored for the Flames, and rookie Sean Monahan had two assists. Ortio, making his second start, finished with 30 saves to help Calgary win for the sixth time in its last seven

home games.

Kyle Turris scored his 20th goal of the season for Ottawa, which has lost four of its last five.

Granlund scored 2:04 into the first period and Byron doubled the lead at 9:12 of the second. Colborne made it 3-0 about 8 minutes later.

Turris spoiled Ortio's shut-out bid just past midway through the third period. □

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NHL modifies Kovalchuk penalty against Devils

TOM CANAVAN AP Sports Writer NEWARK, New Jersey (AP)

— The NHL has reduced its penalty against the New Jersey Devils for their signing of Russian winger Ilya Kovalchuk in 2010.

The league on Thursday announced that the Devils would be allowed to keep

a first-round draft pick it was scheduled to forfeit this year. It also reduced the \$3 million fine assessed against the team for circumventing the NHL-NHLPA collective bargaining agreement.

The Devils recently applied to the league for reconsideration and relief from

a portion of the original penalty, citing primarily changes in circumstances which, in the club's view, changed the appropriateness of the sanctions.

The NHL did not spell out what changed, but Kovalchuk retired after last season and returned to Russia to play there. □

Look for world records to fall at world indoors

RAF CASERT

AP Sports Writer

SOPOT, Poland (AP) —

Whenever Ashton Eaton walks into an arena, a multi-event world record is up for grabs.

It will be no different at the world indoor championships starting Friday.

For good measure, Genzebe Dibaba of Ethiopia is going for another 3,000-meter mark and Sally Pearson of Australia is again sharp enough to challenge for the 60 hurdles record during the three-day competition.

Here are five things to watch for during the world indoor championships at the Ergo Arena:

HUNGRY EATON: Yes, the American already set the world record for the heptathlon at the last world indoors, but Eaton's appetite has often proven insatiable. He is the reigning world and Olympic decathlon champion and world indoor champion.

His individual event performances over the winter show he is again in great



Workers erect the pole vault installation prior to the Athletics World Indoor Championships in Sopot, Poland, Thursday, March 6, 2014. The event runs March 7 through March 9.

Associated Press

shape. Add to that the promise of big crowds at the Ergo Arena and something special could be brewing.

"Good atmosphere and myself feeling good usually are a good combination," Eaton said.

And he has an added incentive in wanting to im-

press his wife, Canadian athlete Brianne Theisen Eaton, who will be performing in the pentathlon.

"The first time we compete at the same time in such close proximity," Eaton said. "About the time I am on the long jump runway, she will be doing high jump only about 20 meters

away."

"It will increase our performances by making it feel a bit more like home."

PEARSON'S BACK: In synch and healthy, there is no better hurdler than Sally Pearson. And she is finally getting back to that point after losing much of last season to hamstring tears. She has already posted a season leading 7.79 seconds indoors, despite having run only three races. And each time, she feels better.

"There is still a lot more to improve on," she said, but predicted most of the kinks would be out of her system by Saturday's final.

"I plan to go a lot faster," she said, adding the 6-year-old world record of 7.68 by Swedish hurdler Susanna Kallur was now within her reach. "Given what I have raced already and the times that I have run, it could be possible."

DIBABA'S NO. 4? If any athlete has taken the winter season by storm it is Genzebe Dibaba.

The Ethiopian has already set world records in the 1,500 and 3,000 meters and a world best over two miles.

Too bad she won't go for a double in Sopot.

She is already the reigning 1,500 champion and had wanted to add the 3,000. The program would have been too much, though.

"I had actually hoped to double and compete in both," she said.

Still, with heats for the 3,000 set for Friday, blazing to another world record on Sunday would already be superlative.

Winning the race with a world-record time would earn her \$90,000, compared to \$40,000 for just taking gold. Still, she has no regrets she set herself such an uphill task.

"I really wanted to know how fast I could run," she said.

CAMPBELL-BROWN'S COMEBACK: Just running and defending her 60-meter title is already a victory for Jamaican sprinter Veronica Campbell-Brown.

Because of a doping scandal, she lost the chance to defend her 200 world outdoor title last year in Moscow. Just weeks before the world indoors, the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld her appeal and cleared the multiple Olympic champion of any anti-doping rule violation.

"We wish her success," IAAF President Lamine Diack said after the world athletics federation had sought a two-year suspension. In May, authorities said Campbell-Brown had tested positive for a banned diuretic at a local meet. The 31-year-old sprinter vowed to clear her name and accepted a provisional suspension while her case was reviewed.

OVERPOWERING AMERICANS: Two years ago in Istanbul, the U.S. team won an amazing 10 gold medals while no other country did better than two.

The record run of the Americans will certainly be tough to duplicate. This non-Olympic year brings new blood into the team which may hold promise but also has a lack of experience.

It can only make the task of veteran Bernard Lagat even tougher. Not only is the 39-year-old runner going for his fourth 3,000 title, he will also be counted upon to give the rookies guidance during the long weekend. □

Cadillac

Continued from page 18

That might be the most penal aspect of the new Doral. Anything hit toward some of the edges feeds toward the water, and there's a lot of water in play.

Not even English was immune. His tee shot on the 18th found the water, and he still had 4-iron to get to the green. But he bounced back on the par-5 first hole by smashing a tee shot so far with help from the wind and the firm fairways that he had a 7-iron left from 213 yards. He hit that to 12 feet for a two-putt birdie, and he was bogey-free the rest of the way.

Dufner said he hasn't had to think his way around a golf course this much since he was at Muirfield last year for the British Open, even though the tracks are nothing alike.

"This used to be a golf course where you grab your driver on every hole,



Jason Dufner hits from the 18th hole during the first round of the Cadillac Championship golf tournament Thursday, March 6, 2014, in Doral, Fla.

Associated Press

swing for the fences and play from there," he said. "You can't get away with that here at Doral anymore."

Dufner didn't feel comfortable with driver on the 14th, so he laid back and had 236 yards left to the par 4. He hit 3-iron and made birdie, anyway. Other times, he failed to dial it back and paid the price. "You're not going to go through this tournament on

this golf course anymore with no bogeys," he said. "Everybody is going to be making some bogeys here and there, so pretty happy with where I'm at."

Jordan Spieth already had three bogeys and a double bogey on the par-5 12th hole. He countered with five birdies and was even par through 15 holes. Only 19 players were under par when the round was stopped. □

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Iceland startup finds success with trivia app

JENNA GOTTLIEB

Associated Press

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (AP)

— A small startup has taken the gaming world by storm, finding success with its QuizUp trivia app and spurning offers to abandon its remote Iceland headquarters in favor of California's Silicon Valley.

The company, Plain Vanilla, on Thursday launches the Android version of QuizUp, which already has 10 million users who have played more than 1 billion matches on their iPhones and iPads.

Founder and CEO Thor Fridriksson told the Associated Press he plans to keep the company based in Iceland in part to show what it is possible to achieve even after the country's horrendous economic problems.

"Iceland has had a tough time since the banking crisis," said Fridriksson. "I think if Plain Vanilla stays in Iceland, creates more jobs and shows other startups what's possible, that's a positive thing."

In the autumn of 2008, Iceland's three largest banks collapsed, sending its economy into a freefall with businesses shuttering, the currency depreciating and unemployment rising to unprecedented levels. The country is still recovering.

In this somber mood, Plain Vanilla's success stands out. It started with 7 employees and currently has 45, Fridriksson said.

Venture capitalists have poured more than \$30 million into the company, which seems to have found a niche in the extremely competitive app business. What makes the trivia app stand out in a

field crowded with tens of thousands of choices?

QuizUp players can choose among more than 400 categories that range from questions about sports to literature to pop culture. Some of the most popular categories include: Harry Potter, Celebrities, Spelling, and Disney.

"For me, it's two things," said Mike Wehner, the editor of The Unofficial Apple Weblog. "First, the ridiculous number of categories available means that there's going to be something that everyone is an expert in. For example, I don't watch a whole lot of TV, but of the shows I do watch, I know a LOT about them. So although I'd probably be really bad at a trivia game where general 'TV' was a category, I'm one of the best in the world at the Futurama category in QuizUp."

The real-time mobile application also allows users to play against other people, not computers. Players can connect with, and challenge friends through Facebook, or play against strangers, which sets the app apart from many other trivia games.

"It constantly pushes you forward by telling you who you're better than," said Wehner. "You answer a few questions about a topic and you don't make much progress, but if you answer a few dozen, you might be the best in your city. Keep going and you're the best in your state, country, and eventually the world. Once you get that first carrot, there's always another one dangling in front of you." □



This photo taken in early 2014 and made available by Plain Vanilla on Thursday March 6, 2014, shows Thor Fridriksson, the founder and CEO of Plain Vanilla Games in their offices in Reykjavik.
Associated Press

World Digital Library grows to 10,000 items

BRETT ZONGKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The

World Digital Library led by the Library of Congress reached a milestone Thursday, surpassing 10,000 items with the addition of ancient manuscripts from the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

Officials said the digital library's collection has grown to include 10,037 digitized manuscripts, maps, books, prints, photographs, films, sound recordings and other cultural items. The ongoing effort is a collaborative project that includes contributions from 102 institutions in 46 different countries.

The content can be ac-

cessed online in seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

The latest contributions include an early 16th-century Gospel manuscript from Ethiopia and a manuscript containing an Ottonian Gospel book fragment believed to have been made in a German monastery in the 10th century. There is also a church calendar in Greek that was created in Byzantium around 1025 to 1041.

The Walters Art Museum has been using a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to digitize its manuscript collection.

Librarian of Congress James Billington said the digital library is making important and beautiful content available to a global audience.

"This project is of enormous benefit to students, teachers, scholars and lifelong learners, and I am gratified to see that it continues to grow," he said.

The World Digital Library began to take shape in 2005 with a \$3 million gift from Google. It was formally launched in 2009 at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris with content from national libraries around the world. Since the launch, Spanish language users have been the largest group using the digital library's resources. □

Disney laying off 700 from interactive unit

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Disney is laying off 700 people from the interactive unit that makes video games and operates websites, about a quarter of the workforce in the division. A Walt Disney Co. spokesman confirmed the layoffs Thursday. The move narrows the company's focus on mobile and social games that use key Disney characters.

Some games that Disney acquired when it bought social game maker Playdom in 2010 for \$563 million, such as *Sorority Life*, will be discontinued. It is also discontinuing one-time hits, such as music play-along game, *Tap Tap Revenge*. Disney Interactive had long been a money-losing unit and last month posted only

its third profitable quarter since results began being broken out in 2008, thanks in part to its Disney Infinity console game, which Disney will keep supporting. The company shuffled the executive ranks at Disney Interactive in November. Co-president John Pleasants stepped down, leaving co-president Jimmy Pitaro with responsibility for

the division. In a statement Thursday, Disney said the restructuring was "difficult but necessary given our long-term strategy focused on sustainable profitability and innovation." Shares of the Burbank, California, company added 37 cents to \$83.05 in afternoon trading. Earlier in trading shares touched \$83.42, an all-time high. □

Staples to close 225 stores as sales go online

FRAMINGHAM, Massachusetts (AP) — Staples will close up to 225 stores in North America by the end of next year as it seeks to trim about \$500 million in costs annually by 2015. The nation's largest office-supply retailer said Thursday that nearly half of its sales are now generated online, so it will aggressively cut costs to become more efficient.

Company shares dropped more than 10 percent before markets opened.

The recession did heavy damage to the industry, which is now under increasing pressure from online retailers as well as discount stores.

There is rapid consolidation under way and rivals Office Depot and OfficeMax just completed a \$1.2 billion merger.

But the overhead costs of running "big box" stores has put companies like Staples under stress.

The closings amount to 10 percent of all Staples locations. The company has 2,200 stores worldwide, 1,500 of them in the United States.

It is unclear how many jobs will be lost or what locations will be shuttered.

Staples also posted fourth-quarter earnings and sales fell sharply. The company's earnings nearly tripled, but that is compared to a period when it booked \$176.6 million in restructuring charges as it closed stores. Staples earned \$212.4 million, or 33 cents per share, in the quarter that ended Feb. 1. That compares with earnings of \$78.1 million, or 12 cents per share, the previous year.

Revenue slumped nearly 11 percent to \$5.87 billion. Both revenue and profit fell short of Wall Street expectations, as did the company's outlook for this quarter. Staples expects sales to fall again and it projected earnings of between 17 and 22 cents per share. Analysts that follow the company had been looking for something closer to 27 cents per share. □

Stocks rise as US job market improves

KEN SWEET
AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Investors were looking for any reason to look past the cold weather that has hampered the U.S. economy in the last few weeks, and they found it. Stocks mostly rose Thursday, helped by a report

economy, following weeks of data that painted a picture of a U.S. economic recovery that was slowing down due to the severe winter weather that has hit much of the country.

"Investors are putting more weight on the data that makes sense and ignoring the data that was im-

sales are now generated online. The stock fell \$2.05, or 15 percent, to \$11.35.

Staples is the second major brick-and-mortar retailer to announce large-scale store closures this week. Two days ago RadioShack said it would close as many as 1,100 locations as part of a restructuring effort.

337,000 claims economists had expected, according to FactSet, and a sign that fewer people are being laid off.

Typically investors would not put much weight in the weekly unemployment report, because the numbers can be volatile. But with the rest of the data investors typically have at their disposal tainted by the weather, including Friday's closely watched monthly government jobs report, investors don't have much to work with at the moment. The figures for weekly unemployment claims coming up over the next several weeks will be the freshest data investors will have, strategists said.

"We won't get a clean reading on the economy until we get through this bad weather," Krosby said. Expectations for the February job numbers are low. Economists expect employers added 145,000 jobs last month and that the unemployment rate held steady at 6.6 percent. Before the bad winter weather hit much of the country starting in December, the U.S. economy was creating around 225,000 jobs a month.

Outside the U.S., investors remained concerned about Ukraine, where tensions have been escalating over Russia's deployment of troops to Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula.

Moscow-backed Crimean officials said Thursday that the region would hold a referendum to decide whether it should be annexed by Russia. □



Trader Michael Mozia works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Stocks mostly rose Thursday, helped by a report that showed the number of people who filed for unemployment benefits fell last week to the lowest level in three months.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

that showed the number of people who filed for unemployment benefits fell last week to the lowest level in three months. The gains were enough to give the Standard & Poor's 500 index its third all-time high this week.

The report on unemployment claims was one of the first bits of good news investors have gotten on the

pacted by the harsh winter weather," said Kate Warne, a market strategist with Edward Jones.

The S&P 500 index rose 3.22 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,877.03.

Staples fell the most of any stock in the S&P 500 after the office supplies store company said it would close 10 percent of its stores because nearly half of its

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 61.71 points, or 0.4 percent, to 16,421.89. The Nasdaq composite fell 5.85 points, or 0.1 percent, to 4,352.13.

The number of Americans who filed for unemployment benefits fell by 26,000 last week to 323,000, according to the Labor Department.

That was far less than the

US companies spend heavily on big mergers in 2014

KEN SWEET

AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — So far, 2014 is looking like the year of the big deal. Flush with cash and high stock prices, companies are buying up the competition at levels not seen since the dotcom bubble. And with Washington providing more clarity on government spending plans, CEOs are more confident their expansion hopes will pan out — especially if the economy keeps growing.

Many of the acquisitions involve American businesses doing the buying or getting bought by overseas rivals. Global deals are up as well.

In the last month, Comcast has offered to buy Time Warner Cable for \$45 billion. Pharmaceutical giant Actavis is buying Forest Laboratories for \$25 billion. And Facebook shocked the technology world by offering \$19 billion for tiny WhatsApp.

Merger-and-acquisition executives say they have expected a pickup in deal activity for a couple of years, given the bull market and economic recovery. But what prevented the really big transactions was uncertainty about the federal budget, the debt ceiling and the fate of President Barack Obama's health care reform law, the Affordable Care Act.

With those issues resolved — at least for now — the way has opened up for bigger, more complex deals.

"The deals we have seen in the last couple of weeks are that tipping point that we've been waiting for," said Mark Walsh, who heads up the M&A practice at Deloitte, one of the world's largest accounting and consulting firms. "There's so much pent-up demand to do a deal now."

U.S. companies announced \$336.13 billion in deals in January and February, according to Dealogic. That's up 31 percent from \$256.21 billion during the same period last year. It's the largest amount

spent during the first two months of the year since 2000. Companies worldwide have announced \$569 billion in deals so far this year, the highest level since before the financial crisis. American companies

announced 1,550 deals in the first two months of 2014, according to Dealogic. While that is down from the last two years, the average transaction size is more than double what it was a year ago.

The high prices reflect companies going on the offensive to boost their earnings. The economy, while growing, still isn't booming. Since the end of the recession, companies have had to act defensively — protect-

ing profits by cutting costs through layoffs or benefit reductions or by moving manufacturing elsewhere.

In an effort to lift earnings and please shareholders, S&P 500 companies have also announced plans for nearly \$1 trillion in buybacks over the next several years, and more than four-fifths of them now issue a dividend, the highest proportion since 1998.

With their tool box nearly depleted, corporations "are looking for that extra bump" in sales now, Walsh said. A lot of Deloitte's M&A business has been with companies "looking to expand their product lines or expand geographies."

Buying Time Warner Cable gives Comcast roughly 30 million customers in markets such as New York City. For Facebook, WhatsApp is an opportunity to buy a fast-growing message service that is popular in emerging markets and Europe. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has said he expects WhatsApp, which currently has 400 million users, to grow to 1 billion users in the near future. □



A silhouetted coaxial cable is photographed with the Comcast Corp. logo in the background in Philadelphia. Comcast Corp. announced in February 2014 that it is buying Time Warner Cable Inc. American companies are buying up the competition at levels not seen since the dotcom bubble. And with Washington providing more clarity on government spending plans, CEOs are more confident their expansion hopes will pan out, especially if the economy keeps growing.

(AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

US factory orders drop 0.7 percent in January

M. CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Orders to U.S. factories fell in January for a second straight month but a key category that signals business investment plans rebounded. That could be an indication that businesses are becoming more confident.

Factory orders dipped 0.7 percent in January, the Commerce Department reported Thursday.

That followed an even bigger 2 percent decline December, which was a larger decrease than first reported and the biggest decline since July. The weakness in both months was led by large declines in demand for commercial aircraft.

Orders for core capital goods, a proxy for business investment, rose 1.5 percent in January, recovering after a 1.6 percent drop in

December.

Demand for durable goods, items expected to last at least three years, were down 1 percent in January while non-durable goods orders slipped 0.4 percent.

The estimate for durable goods was unchanged from a preliminary report. The weakness reflected a 20.2 percent plunge in orders for commercial aircraft, a drop that followed an even bigger 22.3 percent fall in December. Orders for motor vehicles and parts fell 0.9 percent, the second straight decline. Analysts say weakness in this area will be reversed given expectations for continued gains in new car sales.

Orders for primary metals such as iron, steel and aluminum, dropped 1.2 percent while demand for machinery was down 0.7 percent and computer or-

ders fell 46 percent.

Many economists say that manufacturing has gone through a soft patch but will be emerging to stronger growth in coming months. That expectation is based on the view that the overall economy, after slowing in the final three months of last year and the first quarter this year, will rebound to stronger growth. Many economists are forecasting that the economy, as measured by the gross domestic product, could expand at an annual rate of around 3 percent in 2014, up significantly from last year's 1.9 percent gain.

Last year, growth was held back by higher taxes which dampened consumer demand and across-the-board spending cuts by the federal government.

It is estimated those two factors cut growth by about 1.5 percentage points. However, those adverse

impacts are now waning. With the labor market expected to keep expanding, the hope is that growth will reach the fastest pace since before the 2007-2009 recession.

The Institute for Supply Management, a group of purchasing managers, reported Monday that its closely watched manufacturing gauge rose to 53.2 in February, up from 51.3 in January.

The increase only partly reversed a five-point drop in January, but economists were encouraged that the direction was positive. Any reading above 50 indicates manufacturing is expanding.

For February, the index rose in part because of an increase in both new and backlogged orders. There was strength in other areas as well. Four of the 18 industries that are tracked by the survey reported growth. □

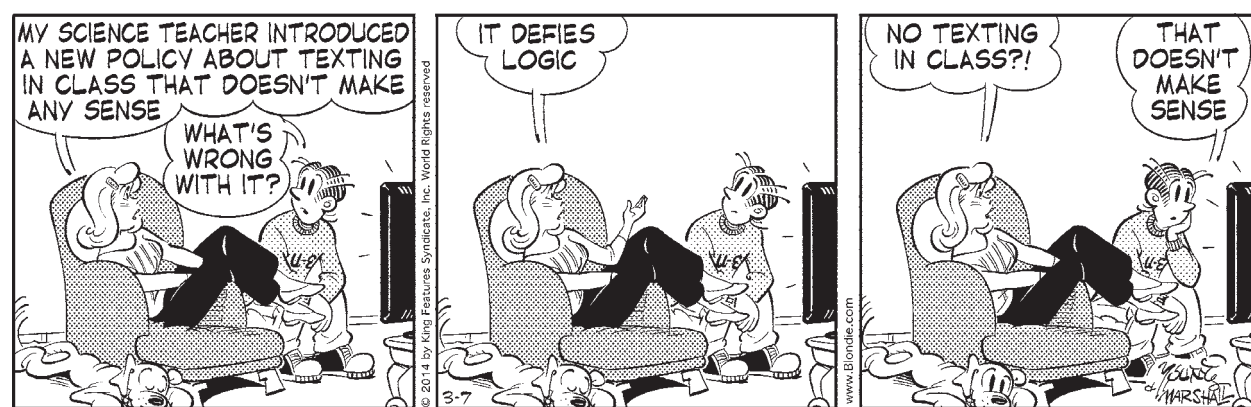
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

							7	
	7		1			4		8
				4	5		3	
	1		4			6		
		9				5		
		4			3		1	
	2		6	1				
5		3			9		4	
	6							

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

3/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

8	5	3	2	6	9	7	4	1
6	7	9	4	5	1	8	2	3
4	1	2	3	8	7	6	5	9
1	8	4	7	3	2	9	6	5
7	9	6	5	4	8	1	3	2
3	2	5	1	9	6	4	7	8
5	6	7	8	1	3	2	9	4
9	4	1	6	2	5	3	8	7
2	3	8	9	7	4	5	1	6

ACROSS

- 1 Blaze
- 5 In the __; shielded from the sun
- 10 Injection
- 14 Zone
- 15 __ B. DeMille
- 16 Mr. Strauss
- 17 Young horse
- 18 Kept in mind
- 20 180° from WSW
- 21 Flow of the waves
- 22 Lewis or Stiller
- 23 Standards
- 25 Oct.'s follower
- 26 Brief rest
- 28 Most unusual
- 31 Narrow street
- 32 Madrid's nation
- 34 Buddy
- 36 Tells a fib
- 37 Go bad
- 38 Lion's neck hair
- 39 Scale divisions: abbr.
- 40 Small game bird
- 41 Piers
- 42 Has __; is emotionally troubled
- 44 Embrace
- 45 Butterfly catcher's need
- 46 __ cats and dogs; pours
- 47 Baked donut-shaped roll
- 50 Without
- 51 Owned
- 54 Starry-eyed
- 57 Ceremony
- 58 __ horse; unlikely winner
- 59 Waken
- 60 Come __; find
- 61 TV show award
- 62 Actor Ed __
- 63 Catch sight of

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20					21						22			
					23	24					25			
26	27								26			29	30	
31						32	33					34	35	
36						37						38		
39						40						41		
						42	43				44			
											46			
47	48	49							50			51	52	53
54						55	56					57		
58						59						60		
61						62						63		

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/7/14

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

CUTE	TOOLS	BETA
OPEN	OWLET	OVEN
LONG	REEVE	READ
ENDLESS	EAGERLY	
	ADO	ARMED
CLANS	JRS	NOBEL
LADD	CAB	GEMINI
IGO	MARINES	DAN
FERRER	TOM	NECK
FREED	BEG	HINTS
	CAPER	LAG
SCROLLS	SASHAYS	
OAHU	AIDED	TREE
WREN	IDEAL	LEAN
SEAT	DENSE	YARD

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3/7/14

DOWN

- 1 __-lift; plastic surgeon's task
- 2 Element whose symbol is Fe

- 3 Persistent
- 4 Dine
- 5 Pinch pennies
- 6 Pays attention to
- 7 Highest point
- 8 Perish
- 9 Shade tree
- 10 Arm covering
- 11 German Mister
- 12 Above
- 13 Shipshape
- 19 Borg of tennis
- 21 Cafeteria
- 24 Dollar bills
- 25 Tack
- 26 Summon
- 27 Excuse
- 28 Stair __; banister
- 29 Rockets, e.g.
- 30 Battlefield vehicles
- 32 Hot tubs
- 33 Luau dish
- 35 Not as much
- 37 Hard cooking fat

- 38 Dawn, for short
- 40 Calm, as fears
- 41 Speaker's platform
- 43 Underhanded
- 44 Zodiac sign
- 46 Elevate
- 47 __ one's time; wait
- 48 Eve's man
- 49 Bit of bacteria
- 50 Astonish
- 52 Perched upon
- 53 Declare untrue
- 55 Tax-deferred retirement acct.
- 56 Distress signal
- 57 Regret

Classifieds

RED/WEEK Resales
Marriott Surf Club
 2x2Br Platinum O.V. \$16Kpw
 3x2 Br Garden view \$15K pw
Marriott Ocean Club
 1 Br Platinum O.V. \$11,5K
 2 Br Platinum O.F. \$29K
 call: (297)562-0712
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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 Stu wk 5 Room # 8202 \$7K
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 Std wk 8 Room # 105 \$7K
 Std wk 9 Room # 1204 \$7K
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Occidental Grand
 Studio Royal Club wk 2/17
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 1 br deluxe wk 2/17 \$14K
 1 br deluxe wk 10 \$14K
 2 br 3 bath wk 2/17 \$30K
 3 br 3 bath wk 2/17 \$35K
 optional all inclusive
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 1 bedroom week 11 and 12
 room #414A
 (sun) pool/ocean view \$20K
 both weeks
Dutch Village
 1 br wk 10 room #27 \$5K
 info: (297)562-0712
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

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RED/WEEK Re-sales
Dutch Village
 Studio wk 9 room # 135 \$6K
 (33 weeks remain on the
 contract)
 (8 can be accelerated)
 call (297)562-0712
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

201447

RED/WEEK Re-sales
Divi Phoenix
 Studio wk 9 room #1403
 top floor over look Palm
 Beach \$7K
Dutch Village
 Studio wk 8 room # 133 \$6K
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TIMESHARE FOR SALE
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 After April 5th

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 weeks 9 & 10 1 bdrm , sleeps 4
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 \$1100/wk.
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201410

Time Share
Divi Village + Golf wk 8 L.G.
 Studio ocean view RM 3409,
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 All amenities \$3950. Also,
 floating wks Divi/ Dutch Village
 mid March to 12/15
 Studios start \$3200, 1BR \$3600,
 Local Until 2/19 565-9394
 E-mail: RMWJMW@AOL.COM
 508-651-0016

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Presidential Suits
 Weeks 7 & 8 Suit 1303
 2 bedr ocean /pool view
 maid service. Quick sale
 available. Asking \$50,000
 e-mail:
aaccavallo@federalmtg.com
 In Aruba till 2/27
 US phone 2018914806

201437

FOR SALE
Condo in Gold Coast
 Every thing's included in this
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Forecasters see El Nino warming of Pacific Ocean

SETH BORENSTEIN

AP Science Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. federal forecasters predict a warming of the central Pacific Ocean this year that will change weather worldwide.

The warming, called an El Nino, can mean an even hotter year coming up and billions of dollars in losses for food crops. Australia and South Africa should be dry while parts of South America become dry and parts become wet in an El Nino. Peru suffers the most, getting floods and poorer fishing.

But it could bring good news for some parts of the planet, leading to fewer Atlantic hurricanes and more rain next winter for drought-stricken California and southern U.S. states. It could also bring a milder winter for the frigid U.S. northern tier next year, meteorologists say.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued an official El Nino watch Thursday. An El Nino is a warming of the central Pacific once every few years, from a combination of wind and waves in the tropics. It shakes up



In this Wednesday, March 25, 1998 file photo, Enrique Lagunas digs a trench to redirect water toward a street in Laguna Beach, Calif. after heavy rains from an El Nino storm hit Southern California.

Associated Press

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climate around the world, changing rain and temperature patterns.

Mike Halpert, acting director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, says the El Nino warming should develop by this summer, but that there are no guarantees.

Although early signs

are appearing already a few hundred feet below the ocean surface, meteorologists say an El Nino started to brew in 2012 and then shut down suddenly and unexpectedly.

The flip side of El Nino is called a La Nina, which has a general cooling effect. It

has been much more frequent than El Ninos lately, with five La Ninas and two small-to-moderate El Ninos in the past nine years. The last big El Nino was 1997-1998. Neither has appeared since mid-2012. El Ninos are usually strongest from December to April. □

Hubble Telescope captures shattering asteroid



CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — The Hubble Space Telescope has captured the first pictures of a disintegrating asteroid.

Asteroid P/2013 R3 was detected in September in the asteroid belt between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. It appeared as a fuzzy object. Further observations by ground telescopes revealed three bodies. Hubble uncovered 10 objects, each with dusty tails. The four largest fragments are up to 656 feet (200 meters) across.

Scientists say the asteroid

began coming apart early last year. They theorize sunlight is slowing pulling the asteroid apart by increasing its rotation.

A planetary scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles, David Jewitt, led the investigation. He says seeing the rock "fall apart before our eyes is pretty amazing."

The pictures were released Thursday. □

This combination image made available by NASA on Thursday, March 6, 2014 shows a series of photos from the Hubble Space Telescope recording the disintegration of an asteroid from Oct. 29, 2013 to Jan. 14, 2014.

Associated Press



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'300' sequel faces tough sell with missing lead

RYAN PEARSON

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Selling "300: Rise of an Empire" was already going to be difficult even before its leading man went missing from promotional duties. Nearly all the main characters died in the original "300," and it's been seven long years since the heavily stylized and bloody Greeks-versus-Persians action film became a worldwide blockbuster.

Then last month Australian actor Sullivan Stapleton, who plays the Athenian warrior-general Themistocles, was injured in Thailand seriously enough to drop out of a press junket, any potential talk show appearances and the Hollywood premiere. In addition, production on his HBO/Cinemax series "Strike Back" was postponed for six months to allow him time to recover.

"We miss Sully and we wish Sully was here today," producer Deborah Snyder said at the premiere this week. "But he had an accident after leaving the set one night when he was filming 'Strike Back' so unfortunately he's recovering." Stapleton's publicist declined to specify how or even when he was injured. Several cast members at the premiere said that while they had been in touch with the 36-year-old actor via email, they didn't know what had happened to him. The first "300," directed and co-written by Zack Snyder from Frank Miller's graphic novel, earned over \$450 million worldwide. It helped make Gerard Butler a star and featured an appearance from then little-known Michael Fassbender. Its signature aesthetic, highlighting muscular real-life bodies against mythical computer-generated backgrounds, is repeated in the 3D sequel, in theaters Friday. The year is 480 B.C. Greek city-states are defending against a Persian invasion by sea at around the same time as the land-based Spartan fighting in the first film. Rodrigo San-



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Sullivan Stapleton in "300: Rise of an Empire."

Associated Press

toro returns as menacing Persian king Xerxes, but Eva Green hijacks the film with her unhinged, sexually aggressive performance as his ally Artemisia, a Persian warrior-queen.

"She's such an extreme character. I think lots of men are going to be scared of me from now on," said Green, the French and British actress perhaps best known for her role in "Casino Royale."

The leather-clad character kisses one man on the lips after beheading him and later shares a violent sex scene with Sullivan. "It's kind of a love-hate fight scene. It's not vanilla sex, that's for sure," she said in an interview.

Artemisia is the latest in a string of dark — and skin-baring — roles for the 33-year-old actress, who also played a witch opposite Johnny Depp in 2012's "Dark Shadows."

"It always has to be justified. It can't be gratuitous or otherwise I would be a porn star," she said, laughing. "I'm like a little bird in real life so that's why I enjoy playing those ladies."

Green, next starring in the Showtime horror series "Penny Dreadful," says whatever audiences may think of her shipboard sword-twirling in "300," she's ready to fight for something else back in Hollywood: a lighter role.

"I hope I won't be type-

cast forever as the bitch," she said. "In this business,

people put you in boxes . because they lack imagi-

nation. So you have to be a warrior." □

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In this March 2, 2014 file photo, Jennifer Lawrence, left, and Matthew McConaughey appear backstage during the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles

Associated Press

'12 Years' vies with 'Hunger Games' at MTV Awards

NEW YORK (AP) — Oscar winner "12 Years a Slave" will face off with blockbusters like "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" and "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" at the MTV Movie Awards. The network announced Thursday the nominees for its 24th annual Movie Awards. The other movie of the year nominees are "The Wolf of Wall Street" and "American Hustle." Most of the best male and female nominees reassemble recent Oscar con-

tenders including Matthew McConaughey, Lupita Nyong'o and Leonardo DiCaprio. The awards' best kiss category will have a clear favorite: Amy Adams and Jennifer Lawrence's smooch in "American Hustle." For best shirtless performance, Jennifer Aniston from "We're the Millers" will vie with DiCaprio in "The Wolf of Wall Street." Conan O'Brien will host the show live April 13 from Los Angeles' Nokia Theatre. □

Kevin Spacey to lead class at 'Bollywood Oscars'

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey is coming to Tampa to lead an acting workshop when the "Bollywood Oscars" — the International Indian Film Academy's weekend and awards — arrives in April. The IIFA announced Thursday that Spacey will be joined in the master class with Bollywood actress Vidya Balan, who won India's prestigious National Award for her thriller Ka-hani.

The awards event honors Indian culture, fashion and film and will take place April 24-26 with workshops, parties and dignitaries from both U.S. and Indian cinema. The show is expected to be watched by up to 800 million viewers around the world when it arrives in the U.S. for the first time. □

Kevin Spacey arrives at the Oscars on Sunday, March 2, 2014, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.
Associated Press

Pharrell Williams details the top songs he's produced



This Feb. 16, 2014 file photo shows singer-producer Pharrell Williams rehearsing before the NBA All Star basketball game in New Orleans. This week Pharrell released his sophomore solo album, "G I R L," which features the Oscar-nominated hit, "Happy." The song is spending its second week on top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Associated Press

MESFIN FEKADU
AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Who hasn't Pharrell produced for?

The hitmaker's Rolodex includes pop heavyweights from Beyonce to Justin Timberlake, maestros like Hans Zimmer and Heitor Pereira, and wildcards such as Daft Punk and Scissor Sisters.

The 40-year-old said his diverse background heavily aided in the making of "G I R L," his funky new album released this week.

"I wanted to work with all cultures and all kinds of people so it could teach me more about my own craft," said Pharrell, who

has produced songs on his own, but many as part of the Neptunes with Chad Hugo. "All of the artists we were blessed to work with that didn't look like us, that didn't sound like us or didn't dance like us, all of that was the very reason I was able to make this album."

Pharrell won nonclassical producer of the year at the Grammy Awards in January, thanks to his work on Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines" and Daft Punk's "Get Lucky." And now he's back on top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart with "Happy," which was nominated for an Academy Award.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Pharrell breaks down his favorite five songs he's produced. We also have him weigh in on our Phavorites.

PHARRELL'S PICKS:

— Usher, "U Don't Have to Call" from "8701" (2001): Solely written by Pharrell, "U Don't Have to Call" was another hit in Usher's epic run as pop's leading man in the early 2000s. "He's just a maestro ... his voice is unmatched ... he supersedes what most people think he can do," Pharrell said. "I just love when we're able to do colorful black music. There's nothing like that. I love all kinds of music and all genres, but obviously just colorful black music is

a good feeling for me personally... We were even able to squeeze in two bridges, which is a rarity for pop radio."

— Jay Z featuring Pharrell, "So Ambitious" from "The Blueprint 3" (2009): Pharrell's first success with Jay Z came when "I Just Wanna Love U (Give It 2 Me)" burst on the scene in 2000, and since the two have collaborated nonstop. "He just continues to get better — it's like fine wine," Pharrell said of the rap veteran. "He's something else. When you talk to him, you see purple. He's wisdom."

— Pharrell featuring Daft Punk, "Gust of Wind" from "G I R L" (2014): Pharrell says creating "Gust of Wind" was like designing a room in your house where some of the accent pieces don't quite fit. So robots came to the rescue. "A song tells you what it needs, where it goes, or what melody is missing, or if there could be more ... with 'Gust of Wind,' it felt good and I loved the song, but I was like, 'Man, you know, this just feels perfect for the robots to get on the chorus and harmonize with me,'" he said. "I played it for them and instantly, you know, they're robots and they just got right to it. There was no lag time."

— Missy Elliott, "On & On" from "The Cookbook" (2005): "That's one of my favorite hip-hop beats I've done of all-time because it's so unorthodox," Pharrell said. "It's Missy, so you're working with a person that's genius. She morphs into anything. Her spirit is super-colorful and larger than life. And she knows how to tap into another zone."

— N.E.R.D., "Life As a Fish" and "Inside of Clouds" from "Nothing" (2010): "That was an ode to awareness and the value of awareness," he said of the reflective groove "Life As a Fish." He adds that "Inside of Clouds" is about "the appreciation for water and what it means to our own biosphere." □



Frozen in a Niche?



MAUREEN DOWD

© 2014 New York Times

As the statuesque Cate Blanchett clutched her statuette, she sent an acid air kiss Sandra Bullock's way.

The "Blue Jasmine" star told her vanquished rival, who was gamely smiling after losing for "Gravity," "Sandra, I could watch that performance to the end of time, and I sort of felt like I had."

But then Blanchett turned all feminist, doing a Nobody-puts-Baby-in-a-niche smackdown. She chided industry colleagues "who are still foolishly clinging to the idea that female films with women at the center are niche experiences," adding, "The world is round, people."

Of course, as Sam Wasson, a chronicler of a Hollywood obsessed with how many adolescent boys show up for opening weekends of comic-book movies, notes: "Everything is a niche film except for tent-pole movies. So women are one of many niches that don't get honored the way they used to when grown-ups went to the movies."

Although the Oscars seemed like a pantheon of diversity for women, gays, blacks and transgenders, Hollywood is disintegrating faster than it is transitioning to modernity. As films lose cultural hegemony to TV, Oscar voters and industry top brass are still overwhelmingly white, male and middle-aged.

The percentage of women directing, writing, producing, editing and shooting films has declined since 1998, according to an analysis of the top 250 grossing films of 2013 domestically by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University. (The anticipated halo effect from Kathryn Bigelow becoming the first woman to win a directing Oscar for 2009's "The Hurt Locker" never happened.)

The center's latest report had some stunning stats: Women accounted for 6 percent of directors, 10 percent of writers, 15 percent of executive producers, 17 percent of editors and 3 percent of cinematographers. And women are still more likely to be working on romantic comedies, dramas or documentaries than the top-grossing, teenage-boy-luring animated, sci-fi and horror movies.

"There's a great deal of gender inertia going on in Hollywood, both off-screen and on," said Martha Lauzen, a professor who has conducted the study for the last 16 years. "If you have all white males working behind the scenes in the film industry, you're going to get a whole lot of white males up on screen."

"Every time that a female-driven film like 'Bridesmaids' makes

boatloads of money at the box office, it is considered a fluke, a one-off. Women comprise 52 percent of all moviegoers. Yet there's still an assumption that men will not go to see a woman's movie, but that women will go to see anything, so they just get the women for free."

Next week, Lauzen is publishing a new study showing that women made up only 15 percent of protagonists and 30 percent of speaking characters in the top 100 grossing domestic films of 2013.

"The people in the community do not want to be called racist. That embarrasses them," she said. "But they don't really mind being called sexist. For some of them, it's a badge of honor."

Some women have boldly broken the silence about the imbalance. Meryl Streep denounced the perversity of icing women out of a business that makes a fortune on films aimed at women.

"Why? Why? Why?" she asked. "Don't they want the money?"

Jodie Foster told The Los Angeles Times that when men hire directors, they say to themselves, "I'm gonna hand over \$60 million to somebody I don't know. I hope they look like me." She also criticized "risk-averse" female studio executives who regard female directors as too much of a risk. In Vogue, Claire Danes said she stopped working for two years before she got "Homeland" because she didn't want to play "the girl."

The bluntest remarks came from co-chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment Amy Pascal in Forbes. She talked about the "paltry" amount women make in Hollywood compared to men, about the "unconscious mountain" of rejection against female directors and how "the whole system is geared for them to fail." When Pascal greenlit Nora Ephron and Nancy Meyers rom-coms, some male executives sniffed "So what's next?" Adam Sandler, Will Smith, the "Spider-Man" franchise, "The Social Network," and this year's "American Hustle" and "Captain Phillips" impressed the guys in the boardroom. Pascal says, given this year's crop of female protagonists, she feels more sanguine. "Between 'Gravity,' 'Hunger Games,' 'Frozen,' 'The Heat,' and others, that's \$4 billion," she told me. "That's a gigantic change."

Pascal said she learned from Geena Davis, who runs an institute in Los Angeles on gender in media, that "the most important thing is having female protagonists. It doesn't matter if they're a villain or a hero. It just matters that their actions have consequences."

She thinks that Hollywood men are no longer reluctant to work with women, saying "any problems are completely unconscious. It's obvious that women understand how to make money. You can't have a year like last year and not see something different. Women have to help each other more. It's our duty." □



Vladimir Putin's Crimean Crime



ROGER COHEN

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For Vladimir Putin, the breakup of the Soviet Union was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century. Everyone has something that makes them tick. Putin's obsession is the restoration of Russia's pride through the restoration of its imperium. The Russian seizure of control of the Crimean Peninsula, a clear violation of the very international law Putin likes to invoke, has turned Ukraine into a European tinderbox. Sarajevo and the Sudetenland: Europe's ghosts hover. Putin argues he is protecting Russian-speakers from the usurpers of Kiev, a pro-European government seen in Moscow as the undercover agents of a predatory West whose talk of liberty is mere camouflage for the advancement of its interests. This is baloney, a "trumped-up" Russian case, in Secretary of State John Kerry's phrase.

The catalyst for this crisis was not proposed Ukrainian membership in the European Union. It was not proposed Ukrainian membership in NATO. It was not some threat to Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. It was, in its infinite banality, a planned trade agreement between Kiev and the European Union.

This was the minnow Putin inflated into a whale through his attempt to strong-arm Ukraine into rejection of the deal, a course the Russian president had followed with equal imperial vehemence elsewhere in what Moscow considers its

"near abroad." On this occasion, however, the people rose up, forcing Ukraine's bungling, sybaritic, trigger-happy president, Viktor Yanukovich, into flight and the arms of his Russian patron.

Putin's Crimean message to President Barack Obama and the West is clear: Not one inch further. After NATO's expansion into the Baltic States (and how critical NATO's protection looks now to Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia), after the European Union's embrace of the likes of Poland and Romania (freed, like the Baltic States, from the Soviet empire), after the humbling by NATO of Serbia (Russia's Orthodox ally), after the West's perceived manipulation of a United Nations mandate to have its way in Libya - after all this the Russian president, as he has already made clear in Syria, is saying: "Game over."

But this is no game. Putin's obsession with a 20th-century order, with turning back the clock to before the "catastrophe," blinds him to the passionate attachment to their nationhood of states liberated from stifling Soviet subjection. There is a grotesque amnesia to Russia's Ukrainian gambit.

It was in Ukraine in the 1930s that Stalin began his experiment in agrarian "utopia," collectivizing the land, declaring war on the peasant farmers known as kulaks for grain. A result, in 1933, was famine; several million died. The Nazis later did their worst in Ukraine with similar contempt for the very idea of its independence. More millions died. To imagine Germany today (unthinkable notion) moving into western Poland with a claim of protecting ethnic Germans there conveys some idea of the historical offense Putin has given to many Ukrainians - and of the fear he strikes into other nations with Russian minorities and dire memories of Moscow.

Obama has said Putin will pay a price. Kerry has spoken of a

"huge price." But the administration's Syrian equivocations underwrote Putin's assertiveness and sense of impunity. Options are now limited. This is the Age of Reluctance, a time when American power is dominant but no longer determinant.

The president must lead. Since 1945 America's security and prosperity have been tied to the steady spread of liberty in a Europe made whole and free. America has a vital interest in not seeing this reversed - not in the land of Yalta and the corpse-filled ravine of Babi Yar. If Ukraine were subjugated to Moscow once more, or dismembered through a Russian annexation of Crimea in flagrant violation of Russia's own commitments in 1994, Obama would become the president who presided over a watershed diminishment of the trans-Atlantic bond.

Pivoting to Asia cannot mean abandoning Ukraine. Obama should muster every form of diplomatic, trade and economic pressure to isolate Putin (China may be ready to help, given its commitment to noninterference); every political means should be used to buttress the Kiev government; and NATO's readiness to defend its members should be ostentatiously underscored.

Obama might say this: "We need to use the United Nations Security Council and believe that preserving law and order in today's complex and turbulent world is one of the few ways to keep international relations from sliding into chaos. The law is still the law, and we must follow it whether we like it or not. Under current international law, force is permitted only in self-defense or by the decision of the Security Council. Anything else is unacceptable under the United Nations Charter and would constitute an act of aggression."

The words are Putin's. He used them about Syria - a real catastrophe. □

Medical Marijuana Providers Fear Effects of Wider Legalization

KIRK JOHNSON

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SEATTLE - There should be, one might think, a note of triumph or at least quiet satisfaction in Muraco Kyashna-tocha's voice. Her patient-based cooperative in north Seattle dispenses medical marijuana to treat seizures, sleeplessness and other maladies. And with the state gearing up to open its first stores selling legal marijuana for recreational use, the drug

na's broader acceptance. In the 16 years since medical marijuana became legal here, an entire ecosystem of neighborhood businesses and cooperative gardens took root, with employees who could direct medical users to just the right strain; there are now hundreds of varieties with names like Blue Healer, Purple Urkle and LA Confidential, each with a variety of purported medicinal benefits. Medical

drug that patients can possess or grow, eliminate collective gardens under which most dispensaries operate, require medical users (unlike recreational users) to register with the state and mandate that all marijuana be sold only by new licensees, effectively shutting down the medical dispensary system. Proponents say the changes are needed to stamp out fraud and help ensure that Washington has a uni-

by more profitable recreational varieties grown for their greater, high-producing THC content, not for headache or nausea relief. In Seattle alone, about 200 dispensaries will have to close, replaced by 21 licensed retailers, and under current state regulations, employees in those shops will not be allowed to even discuss the medical value of the products for sale.

A medical marijuana user

- killing off the old system so that a new one could emerge - was seen as the only way forward, legislators say.

"We're moving from the wild, wild West to the regulated West," said state Sen. Ann Rivers, a Republican and a sponsor of one of the leading bills. A similar bill, sponsored by Rep. Eileen Cody, D-Seattle, passed the House last month.

Rivers emphasized that her goal was to protect, not punish, marijuana patients, although she said she understood their fear of change.

Without formalized rules allowing patients to continue growing their own plants, for example (I-502, the initiative legalizing recreational marijuana, prohibits that), and to have more than 1 ounce in their possession, arrest and federal prosecution is a real risk, she asserts. Her bill allows for both.

A mandatory registry, she said, provided the legal spine to those protections. Under her bill, a registered patient buying medical marijuana at a licensed store with an "endorsement" from the state to specifically sell medical marijuana would also be exempt from the 25 percent retail tax charged to recreational buyers. (Other state taxes, assessed on growers and producers, would already be included in the retail price.)

"The feds have been very clear, that if we don't get our ducks in a row, they are going to bring it to a screeching halt," Rivers said. "We have a chance right now to define our destiny with this, and if we don't we will most definitely allow the feds to define our destiny."

To many patients and providers, though, the proposed mandatory registry is not a good thing. Some patients, especially those receiving Social Security or other federal aid, have said they would refuse to sign up because that would be a legal admission of drug use that they said could jeopardize their benefits. □



Packages of marijuana for sale at Green Buddha, a patient-based cooperative that dispenses medical marijuana to treat seizures, sleeplessness and other maladies, in Seattle. With the advent of recreational marijuana in Washington State, rules for medical providers have changed in ways that could shut down dispensaries.

(Matthew Ryan Williams/The New York Times)

she has cultivated, provided to patients and used herself for years seems to be barreling toward the mainstream.

But her one-word summary of the outlook for medical marijuana is anything but sunny: "Disastrous," she said, standing in her shop, Green Buddha, which she fears she will soon have to close.

The legalization of recreational marijuana for adults in Washington, approved by voters in 2012 and now being phased in, is proving an unexpectedly anxious time for the users, growers and dispensers of medical marijuana, who came before and in many ways blazed the trail for marijuana

users could also start gardens in their backyards and keep large amounts of marijuana at home. It was all very folksy - and virtually unregulated, which the authorities say led to widespread abuses.

Now, under pressure from the federal government, the state is moving to bring that loosely regulated world, with its echoes of hippie culture, into the tightly controlled and licensed commercial system being created for recreational marijuana, which goes on sale this summer. (The first license to grow marijuana was issued Wednesday.) This week, the Legislature is debating bills that would reduce the amount of the

form system, supplying the medical products people need and want while at the same time passing muster with guidelines issued by the federal government last summer, even though marijuana remains illegal under federal law. But many medical marijuana users and dispensary owners say the rules will inadvertently discourage the legitimate use of marijuana to treat illness and pain even as science has increasingly been validating its therapeutic effects. Trusted dispensaries will be shuttered, they contend, and choices will diminish, with the varieties that marijuana medical users prefer squeezed off the shelves

will of course certainly be able to enter a shop and buy marijuana, just like any other adult, once the new stores are open in June, but the old system of medical advice and supply, however flawed or beloved, is over, say both critics and supporters of the new rules. "Prepare for the end," said Hilary Bricken, a lawyer in Seattle who works mostly with the marijuana industry, summarizing the advice she is giving her medical marijuana dispensary clients.

In Washington, some dispensaries might be well run, others poorly, but without oversight, state officials could not which was which. So a clean sweep